READING RELUCTANCE AMONG CHILDREN

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TWO GROUPS OF STANDARD 4 PUPILS

IN A CAPE TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

(Librarianship)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

under the supervision of

Professor J.G. Kesting

OCTOBER 1983

ABSTRACT

Two fundamental questions which frequently confront a children's librarian are 'What do you suggest my child should read?' and 'Why does my child not read, and what can be done to rectify the situation?' It is fairly easy to deal with the first question by referring either to one's own knowledge of children's literature or to the many authoritative books on the subject. The second question poses a problem, because, although much concern has been expressed regarding reading reluctance, current perceptions generally relate to limited aspects only. Such perceptions tend to be based on incidental observations and untested premises rather than on rigorously executed research. Hence it was decided to undertake this research project in an attempt to fill a gap in a sound understanding of reading reluctance among children in a given library environment.

For the purposes of this research the reluctant juvenile reader has been defined as one who possesses the requisite skills of reading, but is disinclined to do so of his own volition. The hypothesis tested is that, on balance, a reader is made rather than born, prejudice against print being something acquired. The thesis consists of a literature survey dealing with possible causes, preventative and curative measures and an empirical investigation directly relates to the opinions found in the survey.

Each section of the literature survey examines the relative

influences of home, school and community on the child, each source of influence being divided into environmental factors such as time, home comforts, book availability, peer and adult pressures and self-esteem. The data used was culled mainly from opinion's expressed in journal articles and (with one exception) by products of research programs directed at other aspects of children's library work. The main corpus of reading extends over the period up until the middle of 1982. Most of the sources are British and American, but the publications of such countries as South Africa, Scandinavia, Canada and Australia are also represented. The use of abstracts widened the international spread slightly.

The empirical investigation employs a self-designed, multiple-choice questionnaire put by the researcher in a classroom environment to 106 children at a co-educational school whose pupils were co-religionists, fairly homogeneous and in the main affluent. Reasons are stated for the inclusion of the various questions. Reading and academic performance records were consulted to complement the empirical evidence emanating from the research.

The responses to of the questionnaire were analysed in terms of the variables of gender (i.e.boy/girl) and reading reluctance/eagerness (self-assessed by the pupils). An attempt was made to correlate the findings with the consensus of opinion reflected in the literature. A copy of the questionnaire and graphic representations of the

responses are included.

Both the literature survey and the empirical investigation lend support to the basic hypothesis. The cause of reader reluctance appears to be multi-faceted, all sections of society being affected by certain factors. Adult education programs to promote awareness and understanding of the problem and re-orientation of the methods used to bring children and books together might be of great value to this and future generations.

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PREFACE

It is hoped that the research findings will contribute, however modestly, towards diminishing the incidence of reluctant reading among pre-adolescent children of school going age.

In choosing between the masculine or feminine form of the personal pronoun, the former has been used throughout the text for the sake of uniformity. It is a general convention to associate the masculine form with the neuter, an approach which has determined the choice of usage in this thesis.

Where the spelling of words is optional, the form used was that found in The Shorter Oxford English dictionary (1955).

The material on which the literature survey (cf. Chs. 1 - 4) and the empirical investigation (cf. Chs. 5 - 7) is based has been drawn from books and journal articles, the bulk of the information being gleaned from the latter.

Basic language restrictions placed limitations on the materials used. The bulk of the literature is of American and British origin. However, a fair sample of South African, Scandinavian, Australian and Canadian sources were used as well as a few isolated articles from such countries as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Nigeria. The material read was mainly in English, some in Afrikaans and 1 or 2 in French. Articles in other languages had to be restricted to abstracts found in Library literature and Library and information science abstracts (LISA).

By and large, all materials referred to in the text were handled personally. The exceptions comprised material which was unavailable for the following reasons:

1) in foreign languages (e.g. abstracts from LISA);
2) unpublished manuscripts, typescripts or mimeographed copies, (e.g. Kotzee, 1973); and
3) not obtainable in South Africa (e.g. Lazar, 1937).

In a few cases only cursory initial notes were taken and when an attempt was made to reconsult the sources they were found to be missing, resulting in incomplete bibliographical information. These omissions in the references are identified by asterisks.

Finally, there are certain individuals the researcher would like to thank for their assistance towards the finished product.

My special thanks go to my supervisor, Professor J.G. Kesting, for his encouragement and guidance, to those who provided the facilities for the empirical investigation, to all the respondents to the questionnaire for their co-operation and last, but not least, to my husband and children whose faith in my project sustained me throughout the writing of this thesis.

DIANNE LYNN MAROCK

SECTION A

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND NEED FOR RESEARCH

It has long been recognized that although many children have mastered all the basic skills of reading they show a strong disinclination to read any more than is absolutely necessary. Such children tend to read only under compulsion, to show little pleasure in so doing, to gain scant insight from what is read and to reject what is recommended. Such reading reluctance does not appear to be limited to any one social or intellectual class.

The literature surveyed provisionally records varying statistics as to the proportion of the population which, for one reason or another show a disinclination to read.

Sarah Landy, for example, claims that in the late 1970s only one-quarter of the adult Canadian population were reading, for pleasure, books of quality on a regular basis. She believes that another quarter lacked the fundamental skills to read because they either had never acquired them adequately or had lost them through disuse. In so far as these statistics may be considered to be valid, it would imply that a full half of the adult Canadian population during the last

decade were to be regarded as reluctant readers during the last decade, who seldom read, or if they did, read without pleasure (Landy, 1977: 379). Unfortunately Landy does not state the source of these statistics.

In an article in Time of 14 February, 1938, it was claimed that 34% of the American population read many books, 23% never read books, while 43% were considered reluctant readers. It would seem, therefore, that 66% of the American population never or seldom read a book at that time (cf. also Wentworth, 1941: 292).

The position had not improved by the mid-1950s according to Gordon Dupee. He claims that whereas in 1937 one would have found that 29% of the adult American population were reading a book on any given day, by 1956 this figure had decreased to 17% (Dupee, 1956: 6).

In Britain it would seem that an estimated 60% of the literate British adult population rarely, if ever, buy or borrow books. Broadly speaking, this may be claimed to constitute the body of the reluctant adult reader population in such a highly industrialized country as Britain. Authoritative statistics are not available to support this common contention. The only statistics at the disposal of a researcher are those of library issues, which for various reasons cannot be taken at face value. Although they state the number of books borrowed from library systems, the figures for one thing do not refer to the actual number of borrowers. As a result of this, few realize the relatively insignificant

percentage of the total population (both adult and children) which constitute active (adult) library borrowers (Chambers, 1969: 4).

Regrettably, the researcher could find no trace of statistics on the incidence of reluctant reading other than those taken from Western countries. It would be of interest to discover whether these statistics would differ if people brought up under totally different socio-cultural conditions were examined. For an answer to this question it might be of value to undertake a research project among literate blacks, both urban and rural, in South Africa where the mingling of Western and Third World cultures is unique. Much research has been devoted to <u>what</u> and <u>how</u> people read, but with 1 exception (viz. the studies undertaken by Landy in the 1970s), there appears to be little or no research directed at discovering <u>why</u> children do or do not develop into readers. Despite the interest and concern shown in the literate non-reader (cf. 2.3.1.2) in academic circles, she could find no trace of previous studies related to the incidence of reluctant reading, only a multitude of research projects concerned with the process of reading and reading interests, but none which examine how the development of interest in reading is affected by a variety of contributing factors (Landy, 1977: 380).

Educational objectives today are to develop the child's mental powers, cognitive thinking, and his ability to apply the practical knowledge he has obtained as distinct from

knowledge acquired by rote learning (Medvedeva, 1972: 203). Reading has strong emotional influences affecting attitudes and understanding which help children to grow up with an "intellectual and imaginative spine of their own", (Blishen, 1968: 29) and function effectively in the turbulent years ahead.

The authorities consulted all emphasize the importance of reading in the child's development. It enriches the child's life, although it should not be regarded as a substitute for living. Children who have not been taught this are, according to May Hill Arbuthnot, disadvantaged children who have been denied a precious gift (Arbuthnot,[1] 1957: 2).

In the words of the English novelist, Virginia Woolf

> "When the Day of Judgement dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their reward ...the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms 'Look these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading'" (Woolf, 1932: 270).

Others who consider that the non-reader is disadvantaged are Fader and McNeil, who write that a man who does not read is limited to his own experience and is therefore the poorest

(1) This thesis will refer exclusively to Arbuthnot, 1957 because although the 5th edition of Sutherland, 1977 has been read and is therefore included in the bibliography it was not available at the time of researching and writing.

of men (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 5). This sentiment is echoed by Joyce Boniwell who feels that without the sense of wonder and romance which is imparted by books there would be only little adults and not children. Books she believes should be regarded as a source of joy and pleasure and not simply as a source of information (Boniwell, 1960: 211). This plea for a balance between the concepts of reading for pleasure and reading for facts is endorsed by Lilian Batchelor (1961: 323).

If education is to achieve the continuation of the democratic form of government to which the West ascribes it would seem, in the words of the eminent American President, Thomas Jefferson, that this goal cannot be attained by a world populated with non-readers. He stated that ignorance and freedom do not go together and cannot create a state of civilization (Time, 1980: 63).

Many other reasons have been mooted by the writers surveyed as to why reading is important to the well-being of mankind. May Hill Arbuthnot considers that children wish to maintain a balance between personal happiness and social approval and books can directly or indirectly help them to do this. Books can deepen understanding, supply sound social insights and deepen an appreciation for beauty (Arbuthnot, 1957: 2-3, 16). Another writer who maintains that reading has a strong emotional influence and affects the reader's attitudes is Batchelor (1961: 321-2).

Voicing the same opinion, Dora Smith adds that such under-

standing can dispel half-truths and tends to enable the person to reach an intelligent analysis of prejudice (Smith, 1947: 12-3).

Another reason for the establishing of the reading habit is that a reader is never bored or looking for amusement. Reading, like the arts and sport, requires practice, but the effort expended to acquire the skills is worthwhile (Cleary, 1966: 116).

The reason for studying the incidence of reluctant reading among children, as opposed to adults, is based on the assumption the early years of a child's development are crucial to his ultimate reading behaviour. Richard Bamberger claims that a child does not come armed with experience and prejudice and therefore tends to read more intensely than an adult, living and identifying himself with the characters in the story. Books are a decisive factor in the child's inner development. They stimulate his imagination, influence his emotional maturation, aid him in moral and intellectual decisions and enrich his knowledge. The reverse order, Bamberger maintains, is true for adults, who tend to read primarily to obtain knowledge, then for ethical understanding and lastly, and only in the case of a few, for the purpose of promoting their inner development. He considers therefore, that literature is the third power of education, the others being home and school (Bamberger, 1964: 205, 207).

Much has been written in the literature regarding the be-

haviour patterns of the disadvantaged (cf. also 2.2.8). Authorities continuously suggest that it is especially important that they should be reached through books in view of the fact that they often have weak self-concepts and low aspirations. If the disadvantaged are attempting to enhance their self-development reading may well provide a path towards a more productive life (Bloomfield, 1970: 242).

Any who think that the problem of reluctant reading is primarily restricted to the disadvantaged and may therefore question whether this study has any relevance in terms of the majority of children, should, if they examine the statistics quoted earlier in this section, be aware that the problem cuts right across the social barriers: the number of reluctant readers appears to be far greater than the number of disadvantaged in the population. It has been observed by Daniel Melcher, that although more non-readers come from disadvantaged homes than from any other type of home, it is possible to find among siblings some who read and others who do not. He maintains that the incidence of non-reading in the advantaged school population is rarely below 20-25% and suspects that the number of non-readers in any school population would not be lower than that in the event of suitable literature being made more generally available (Melcher, 1973: 3110).

The deficiencies of an education based on rote learning and the importance of the development of an analytical, creative and innovative approach in pupils (which the use of books

helps to achieve) is stressed by Cynthia Hugo, director of READ (cf. also 3.3.2.1), an organization established because of a growing concern about the lack of books and libraries in black South African schools. She maintains that it costs 25 times as much to remedy these defects when pupils reach working age as it does at the school level. She therefore feels that if the private sector supports READ's endeavours it will not be making a charitable donation but an investment in economic survival (READ News, 1982: 1, 4).

If the opinions of these authorities (viz. that book reading is of paramount importance to the development of the well-rounded, civilized human being) are to be accepted, and if the statistics of reluctant readers referred to above has general validity, it would seem warranted to claim that research into the incidence of reluctant reading is a worthwhile project on which to embark.

It can be assumed with some confidence, therefore, that it will contribute towards a clearer understanding of the problems involved in the prevention and cure of reluctant reading among children.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The 4 tasks of this paper are:-

1. To attempt an investigation of the factors which cause pre-adolescent children to become reluctant readers, the hypothesis being that such readers are made rather than born, prejudice for or against print being something

acquired.

It would be unwise or even erroneous to ignore the issue of the nurture/nature controversy entirely as reading reluctance is merely one aspect of the manifest human being. From the moment the egg is fertilized genetics determines interaction with environmental factors, thus setting certain developmental limits, be they broad or narrow, and the ease with which such development can take place (Pervin, 1970: 17).

The decision to test an hypothesis based on environmental factors only was determined by the intention of this research that it may affect changes which will hopefully cause a decrease in the percentage of reluctant readers in the population. Should the hypothesis prove to have been substantiated it will facilitate the application of the principles which emerge from the study, as these will relate to environmental conditions of remedial action. Moreover, as the definitions of the reluctant reader, by consensus of opinion, imply that he is one whose reasons for not reading are not brought about through either physical or mental causes, genetic determinants as such have been disregarded.

2. To survey the action being taken elsewhere in the world in an attempt to shed light on means of preventing the incidence of or the spread of reluctant reading among children in South Africa.

3. To survey the action being taken to reduce the incidence

of reluctant reading among children.

4. To study the incidence of reluctant reading among 2 groups of Standard 4 pupils in a Cape Town primary school.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 **Literature survey**: In order to deal with the topic of investigation effectively the researcher needed to base the research on a systematic survey of the relevant literature available, analysing the general attitudes towards the problem, viz. the causes (cf. Ch. 2), attempts at prevention (cf. Ch. 3) and reduction (cf. Ch. 4) of the incidence of reluctant reading. The range of source material used was dealt with in the preface.

1.3.2 **Empirical investigation**: The study is based on empirical investigation (cf. Chs. 5-7 and Annexures A and B), designed in the light of information derived from an analysis of the literature survey.

1.3.3 **Structure**: The structure envisaged for the thesis is (a) a literature survey; (b) an empirical investigation, and (c) conclusions, relating to the main hypothesis (cf. 1.2.1) and derived from the examination of (1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 1.2.4).

SECTION B

LITERATURE SURVEY

CHAPTER 2

FACTORS CAUSING RELUCTANCE

It is commonly acknowledged that the factors which contribute to reluctant reading are many and varied, and may be both inherent and environmental. A reader is commonly considered to be a person who has both the ability and the inclination to read. This inclination may stem from a variety of motives, such as a need for information, a desire for self-understanding or a wish to escape from the real world into an imaginative one. Thus reading becomes an essential and satisfying part of such a person's life (Srygley, 1964: 28).

By definition, therefore, the reluctant reader is one who possesses the ability to read but lacks the innate inclination to become engaged in the reading process. Although he may have the required reading skills at his command, he is likely to have limited interest in reading and on the whole will tend to read only when necessary and very rarely for pleasure (Alm, 1962: 101; Dunkle, 1974: 243). This study will therefore disregard organically dysfunctional factors

affecting reading skill, confining itself instead to the reading problems of children who do not suffer from such major physical disabilities as dyslexia or gravely impaired eyesight.

A survey of the literature reveals that despite marked differences in emphasis among the opinions advanced by authors - in so far as some may stress the importance of socio-economic factors, while others direct their attention to more personal issues, such as parental influences or children's lack of self-esteem as being the prime causes of a reluctance to read, there is a significant degree of consensus regarding environmental causes of reading reluctance. This study will address itself to influences emanating from the urban environment, particular attention being given to the situation of the socio-economic disadvantaged. The reason for such a demarcation of the field is that, with the exception of brief and occasional references to the rural areas with regard to book non-availability (a problem which would seem to be disappearing rapidly in the industrialized countries in the West) the literature tends to be predominantly concerned with the urban situation.

It will be noticed that certain aspects of the problem are dealt with at much greater length and in much greater depth than others. However, this should not be seen as being necessarily an indication of their relative importance to the main topic under discussion, viz. the incidence of reluctant reading.

It should be acknowledged, rather, that Section B is a literature survey, and that it is the literature itself which dictates the parameters of each such topic. In many cases the writers consulted appear to regard certain facts as self-evident, dealing with these in a cursory manner irrespective of their intrinsic importance, whereas in other instances, it is clear that relatively minor points have attracted the detailed attention of the writers concerned. Hence the relative balance of the subject matter in this and the next 2 chapters has been somewhat distorted.

Throughout this survey continuous reference will be made to the contents of 2 books by Aidan Chambers, viz. The reluctant reader (1969) and Introducing books to children (1973). It is submitted that the reason for the predominance of this author among the writers' contributions does not reflect a personal bias in his favour, but derives rather from the fact that Chambers' works are the 2 most comprehensive monographs of direct relevance to this thesis. The literature tends on the whole, to be concerned with what and how children read i.e. related to their interests and skills, rather than to the reasons why they are reluctant to read. Most of the relevant and available literature is found to be journal articles, which tend to be rhetorical and categorical in their pronouncements because they are usually opinion rather than research papers. Works of a more scholarly nature are mostly short papers which have been delivered at specialist conferences. These are fewer in number

than the journal articles and are published in composite monographic works.

Research in the field has been sparse and appears to have been seldom directly concerned with the reluctant reader, relevant information frequently being a by-product of some other investigation. Even Chambers presented views based on observation during his many years as a school librarian rather than empirical research.

2.1 THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD

For the purposes of this survey an attempt will be made to divide both the source of influences causing reading reluctance and the possible prevention and remedy thereof into 3 main categories, viz. (a) the individual child; (b) the parent; and (c) the community.

Our point of departure will be the child as the originator of causes for reader reluctance, since he is the the individual reader with whom we are ultimately concerned.

Fader and McNeil (1969: 5) consider that, irrespective of a child's socio-economic situation, if he is a reluctant reader he can be regarded as being a 'deprived' child in the general sense of the word.

The literature surveyed indicates that there are a variety of reasons for a child becoming a reluctant reader. Many of these children suffer from deprivations other than a reluctance to read. These include a lack of reading skill; a lack of time; a lack of repose; a lack of motivation and an in-

adequate development of sensitivity and imagination. Emotional stress and the difficulties encountered on reaching adolescence have also been cited by the writers as possible causative factors towards the incidence of reluctant reading among children.

2.1.1 LACK OF READING SKILLS

Although a child may have command of the essential reading skills, such skills may not necessarily be equal to those of the average child in his chronological reading age. This can result from the interplay of inherent and environmental conditions which may prevent the acquired basic reading skills from being applied effectively (i.e. making reading an easy and pleasurable experience). The problem is further aggravated if Nell's findings that those who read only what is necessary, tend to read more slowly than those who read for pleasure, have general validity (Nell:1978(a)).

Before examining the possible causes of reading skill deficiencies it would seem appropriate to summarize the composition of these skills very briefly. There are 3 levels of reading ability, viz. (a) basic skills which are used for decoding words; (b) intermediate skills which enable the reader to identify words efficiently (i.e. reading with ease) and (c) advanced skills of comprehension which enable the reader to interpret the material. These skills are not mutually exclusive but must be learnt concurrently. The basic skills such as those presupposing an understanding

that the written text is identical to the spoken language in that it carries a message; that the shape of the letters represent spoken sounds and that words are written from left to right and top to bottom are competencies which many children acquire before they actually begin to learn to read (Donald, 1979: 2).

The reason for a child's lack of reading skill may be due to one or more of a variety of causes.

Emotional problems which inhibit the ability to concentrate, as well as the need to grapple with dual language vocabularies, may influence reading skills. Absenteeism during crucial stages of learning which are caused by illness or by continual uprooting, can also add to the uneven development of reading skills. These in turn are likely to affect the child's comprehension of the material (Dunkle, 1974: 243; Larrick, 1967: 3815).

Likewise research undertaken in the USA on 305 children reveals that the child's attitude towards the content of the material being read may affect comprehension unfavourably (Groff, 1962: 314). This again, can interfere with the development of reading skills (Crossen, 1947).

Even if the child has access to books, per se (cf. also 2.2.8.1) these books may sometimes be detrimental to his potential enthusiasm for reading. Alphabet books tend to illustrate a letter with a word which does not contain the sound of that letter. Thus the child is taught that 'E' is for eye, 'G' is for gnome and 'K' is for knife (Melcher,

1973:3117).

There are some who may feel that a lack of reading skill is endemic to certain cultural groupings. Testing adult reading skills some 40 years ago, Buswell (1937: 109-16) found, for example, that black Americans generally performed below their white counterparts of the same educational level in reading ability. He suggests that these collective differences may be attributable to the uneven conditioning of segregated schools, rather than to innate deficiencies.

A reluctance to read on the part of a child often stems from the reading difficulties which may result from the above causes.

Research undertaken by the Plowden Commission in Britain in 1964 revealed that girls are better readers than boys (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 19) (cf. 2.2.8). Thus if the lack of reading skills relates to reluctant reading then it may be expected that a greater percentage of boys than girls will be reluctant readers.

Slow readers, i.e. those who tend to read word for word and not in an easy flowing manner, are potentially reluctant readers (Dunkle, 1974: 244; cf. also Nell, 1978(a)). On the whole reading difficulties reach their peak at the 10 to 14 year-old level, when children generally find reading their textbooks a burden. Such children seldom consider reading a pleasurable activity, especially when their social interests are far beyond the reach of their personal capabilities, in which case they tend "to give up the battle of the book

quietly" (Arbuthnot, 1957: 598).

The struggle to acquire reading skills, if accompanied by failure, may cause emotional damage, adversely influencing a child's attitude towards reading. This aspect, however, warrants further treatment on its own, and will be discussed in more detail in section 2.1.6.

2.1.2 LACK OF TIME

Lack of time in a child's life may be due to the fact that his out of school hours are occupied by working for gain, home chores and extra-mural activities. The home is not the sole cause of such deprivation for the school also must bear a portion of the responsibility.

A very perplexing question has been as to whether or not the above activities undertaken during non-school hours prevent children from having sufficient time for reading. Much research has been undertaken in an attempt to determine the realities pertaining to this question.

As early as 1937 May Lazar concluded that one of the greatest difficulties encountered by teachers and librarians in stimulating interest in reading in New York schools was the fact that pupils had to work at home or in gainful employment, hence having no time in which to visit the library (Lazar, 1937: 25).

This problem is not peculiar to urban North America; it is also pertinent to Africa. In an investigation 10 years ago into aspects of library provision within the urban African

townships of what was then known as Rhodesia, it was found that because many Africans tended to regard children as a cheap form of labour,these children, too, had difficulty in finding time for library visits (Russell, 1973: 37).

Both instances - divergent as the respective circumstances may have been - demonstrate clearly that the concrete factor of a lack of time is just one cause of reluctant reading at work in very complex socio-economic situations.

There are fears that, because one of the prerequisites of contemplative reading is time to relax, there may be a dissipation of energy and the main achievement of a rounded personality will not be achieved if the child has too many extra-curricular activities (Rapport, 1956: 21).

In contrast, however, on the basis of research conducted in Canada, it was concluded that readers have a greater and wider range of extra-mural activities, including a greater attendance at cinema, than non-readers (Landy, 1977: 387). This, however, brings into play the factor of a wider interest spectrum, an issue which will be discussed later (cf. also 3.2.3, 3.3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.1).

Another research project, undertaken in Natal, South Africa, found no significant correlation between the amount of time spent on extra-mural activities and the number of books read. It was therefore not possible to assert conclusively that a child with more leisure time generally tends to read more, or, if further inroads were to be made into the child's free time, that he would necessarily read less

(Schauffer, 1964: 45).

With regard to the school being partly responsible for children having a lack of time for reading this may stem from a fear among teachers that the sight of classes of children engaged in seemingly passive and educationally unfruitful activities such as reading, would leave a false impression of wastefulness, resulting in an inadequate allocation of classroom time for reading and a tendency for such teachers to relegate the reading of library books to homework sessions. At home these books may or may not be read, owing to the prevalence of counter-activities such as television and sport, a matter which will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis (cf. also 2.2.3, 2.3.3.2 and 2.3.3.2.1), leaving little or no time for relaxed, contemplative reading (Alm, 1962: 103-4). In view of the growing awareness since the time of Alm's observations of the importance of reading as a classroom activity, the factor of inadequate classroom reading time may not be as great a problem today as it was in 1962.

Although coming to the same conclusion as did Alm, viz. that the only opportunity to read for no purpose other than pleasure may arise during school hours, Chambers contends that the child who truly wishes to read will organize his life accordingly, lack of time being merely an excuse given to cover up for less acceptable reasons for not reading (Chambers, 1969: 7; 1977(a): 573).

From the findings of Landy and Schauffer, as expressed

earlier in this section, it appears that research corroborates Chambers' opinion that, although lack of time may be used as an excuse by the reluctant reader, it will not significantly affect the amount read by a dedicated reader. Many factors contribute towards the phenomenon of reluctant reading and it seems, therefore, that lack of time will only become a significant issue if coupled with a multiplicity of causes such as lack of repose and motivation, and inadequate development of sensitivity and imagination (cf. also 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.1.5).

2.1.3 LACK OF REPOSE

This topic is dealt with by only 1 of the writers consulted. Here the author postulates that human beings have certain basic needs, 1 of which is the need to withdraw from social pressures, and reading may well be a means of achieving this.

Unlike most communication, which is geared to appeal to a maximum number of people and can be enjoyed only at specific times, reading is an activity which allows the participant to chose his time and place and to attempt to satisfy his personal needs. Lack of repose, caused by the overstimulation of the environment in which we live, may be a greater cause of mental stagnation than personal laziness (Jenkinson, 1964: 55-6).

One of the prerequisites of contemplative reading, as mentioned previously (cf. 2.1.2), is time to relax. If a lack

of repose means that the child is unable to escape from social pressures and relax reading he may become a reluctant reader being ignorant of the possible satisfaction that reading may bring to him.

2.1.4 LACK OF MOTIVATION (cf. also 3.2.10 and 3.3.3.2.1)

Several of the writers deal with the subject of motivation and the concept of self-satisfaction and are in basic agreement as to its influence in causing reading reluctance.

Social isolation which is a feature of homework and the regimentation of school attendance tends to contribute towards an unfavourable attitude towards books (Roe, 1965: 19). Unless the child can appreciate the use and value of reading, there is little likelihood of an interest in books being established. Personal satisfaction, parental and school approval and peer values are powerful motivating forces (Roe, 1964: 3) (cf. also 3.1.2, 3.2.9 and 3.3.2). Similarly a warm positive family atmosphere is part of the motivational requirement for adult-orientated learning. Disadvantaged children, therefore, may not only lack the motivation to read but also the motivation to learn to read. They need to devote their early schooldays towards building up a positive relationship with the teacher before learning can take place (Milner, 1951: 111).

If there is no stress on reading as a worthwhile and acceptable occupation, the child will probably choose to spend his leisure time involved in sporting activities or passively

listening to or watching the mass media (Chambers, 1969, 1973; Fader & McNeil, 1969; McClellan, 1977: 46).

2.1.5 INADEQUATE DEVELOPMENT OF SENSITIVITY AND IMAGINATION

It is suggested that imaginative growth represents the second stage of learning and is normally unaccompanied by a critical faculty (cf. 2.2.5, p. 42). An inadequate development of a capacity to think and feel imaginatively makes it difficult for children to relate to characters in books and to enter their imagi- nary world. Such children will be able to grasp facts but will tend to find the reading of fiction extremely difficult, being unable to interpret the nuances which need to be supplied by their own imagination (Schucking, 1966: 43-7, 78).

A concrete example of this can be seen when 2 children, one of the imaginative and the other of the unimaginative type, tackle the same problem, the unimaginative child will tend to climb a rope ladder faster than the imaginative child because physical dexterity constitutes a major objective. The latter imagines himself as participating in an adventure (e.g. seeing himself perhaps as a fireman), and verbalizes this on his way to the top, thus becoming fully involved (Bodger, 1969: 402).

Children who choose only works of information rarely develop a desire to read for pleasure, and, unless encouraged to read both types of books, tend to remain unaware of the value of reading for its own sake (Leng, 1968: 192-3). This

concept of reading for pleasure as an act of self-satisfaction, will be elaborated on throughout this survey. It would therefore seem apparent that if a child, because of an inadequate development of sensitivity and imagination, usually shies away from works of fiction, such a child is most likely to join the ranks of the reluctant readers.

2.1.6 EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL STRAIN

Emotional disturbances which lead to aggression, withdrawal and a short attention span are often to be found in the reluctant reader. These problems may proceed, rather than result from reading difficulties.

The Plowden Commission found in research undertaken in Britain in 1964 (cf. 2.2.8) at the 7 year-old level that boys tended to be less adequately adjusted to school than girls and more reluctant to attend school (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 26). Such behavioural problems may partly account for the fact that boys, on average, tend not to read as well as girls (cf. also 2.1.1).

Failure, pressure, a fear of books or a suffering from prejudice may all contribute towards such an emotional disturbance.

Times of strain (e.g. such as those caused by living circumstances) tend to sap the child's desire to read and the stamina to tackle anything long and complicated. Moreover, if the situation is mishandled, and the child is accused of bad behaviour, it can result in the establishment of a

permanent pattern of non-reading (Chambers, 1973: 38).

It has been observed that the poor reader, more often than not, tends to be a child who has some personal problems, which are exaggerated owing to the fact that his needs have been inadequately met in his home, in the school and in the community (Robinson, 1953: 876-7).

Failure (cf. also 3.3.3.3.3 and 3.3.3.3.4) would seem to be a personal problem of some importance in a child's life.

Non-recognition of the fact that there are differences in children's learning ability may cause personality difficulties. An attitude of defeat develops into doubts about the ability to learn in any field. Such children, Cleary (1972: 47) suggests, tend to become troublemakers, there seeming to be a correlation between delinquency and reading reluctance. Backed by 7 years of research undertaken in the USA, Frederic Wertham also concludes that emotional and mental strain results from reading disorders and this may account for the apparent correlation between reading disorders and delinquency (Wertham, 1955: 136). This theory is supported by McClellan (1977: 45) who writes that according to recent statistics 20% of the prison population of the United Kingdom need remedial reading.

Police in Detroit and Wayne County, Michigan, USA found that after a reading-room program had been established in 10 school areas, delinquency increased in 1 area, while the position remained static in 2 other areas but in the remaining 7 areas the incidence of such forms of misbehaviour

decreased to as much as 61% of the corresponding figures for the previous year. Fader & McNeil suggest however, that an enormous proportion of law breaking is due to sheer boredom and that if children can become interested in reading they are more likely to have something more worthwhile to occupy their time. They think therefore that it is difficult to draw a firm line, and to state categorically that delinquency is caused by emotional problems which can be attributable to failure, or that it is merely the result of nonreaders having unoccupied time to fill (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 89-90).

Without a feeling of achievement and satisfaction the child will tend to associate reading with a sense of failure, inadequacy and confusion. For the child the book becomes a symbol of everything connected with school, and he rejects it as unnecessary for himself and intended only for 'intellectuals'. The longer the problem is left unattended, the stronger the sense of alienation within the child, which, in turn, tends to smother the inclination to try something which had proved unpleasurable to him in the past. A reading problem may be resolved more effectively by the achievement of success than by an attempt to rectify past failure (Alm, 1962: 101-2; Berger, 1970, 263; Dunkle, 1974: 243; Robinson, 1953: 875).

According to the literature, pressure, another of the possible causes of emotional disturbance, may be caused by teachers, parents and even by the child himself. There has

been a tendency in the twentieth century among educationalists to concentrate on producing skilled, rather than happy relaxed readers (Young, 1978: 25). This has caused children to become over-regulated, to experience lack of attention and to have little self-confidence. Furthermore, time has not usually been specifically set aside to examine their needs, and as a result they may become frustrated and find themselves in conflict with society. Thus, pressures close down on their wishes and desires, causing emotional eruptions that are unpleasant in the home environment and dangerous in group situations. For such children the world tends to become less and less family orientated as a direct consequence of their non-communicative attitude being misunderstood. The challenge to educationalists and parents therefore is to attempt "...helping each youth find his individual potential in the face of conflicting values" (Cushman, 1959: 611).

Pressures to which the child is subjected may be caused by teachers who often demand of the child reading tasks beyond his capabilities. Reading aloud, for example, may constitute a great pressure, especially for the poor reader. It would seem to be purposeless when demanded by the parent, for in this case it usually teaches nothing but is solely a means of checking progress (Alm, 1962: 107).

At home, failure may produce an emotional battlefield and at school cause embarrassment which is due perhaps to the ridicule which may cause the child to develop negative

attitudes towards reading (Alm, 1962: 109).

In a one-day workshop held at the University of Cape Town on 26 July, 1980 on Learning disabilities - a team approach: Relevance of assessment to classroom action, Anita Worrall also expressed the view that reading aloud in front of a class can be a source of great tension to children, causing negative emotional and educational repercussions.

Parents, too, may set unrealistic goals based on a misguided concept of their child's abilities. This may well result in antagonism, rebellion and withdrawal, the consequences of which is a reluctance to read (Alm, 1962: 107).

It appears from research on 468 children of an average age of 10 1/2, undertaken between 1956-61 by the Department of Child Study in Britain that when parental aspirations are unaccompanied by either affectionate support or cultural stimulation it is rare for the child to achieve scholastically and reading levels tend to be several years below chronological age. Too low expectations can also affect reading levels but not, it appears, to the same extent (Pringle, 1970: 12, 34).

There is also the problem of self-pressure. The child may aspire to goals which he is unable to achieve. He may be a perfectionist, may try to compete with his siblings or may feel that he must satisfy parental expectations, whether real or imaginary (Alm, 1962: 107).

Such pressures will mostly remove all joy from reading and are likely to contribute greatly to the incidence of reading

reluctance amongst children.

A fear of books is not uncommon among children. Being confronted by a vast display of books with unlimited choice may prove a somewhat overwhelming experience to a child. Children are sometimes unnerved by a feeling of inadequacy when reminded of their extremely limited knowledge of books. Many children, when faced with shelves of books, not knowing what to read, will tend to make their selection on the basis of the number of pages, the size of the print and other extraneous factors. Such situations, in which subject interest has played no part in the child's choice of suitable reading matter, are bound to have the effect of reinforcing latent reluctance (Alm, 1962: 102; Chambers, 1969: 114; Wickham, 1977: 14).

Sometimes the choice of a book of non-fiction, as opposed to fiction, may be a result of a disturbed personality, because such children find the handling of emotional situations necessary in the reading of fiction very difficult (Williams, 1971: 30).

Prejudice, too, plays a part in evoking reader reluctance. In the early sixties, in the USA, many of the poor (among whom black Americans featured prominently) were reluctant readers because young people from lower socio-economic strata generally found the books seldom related to the realities of their day-to-day slum lives. Little was mentioned specifically, of the black man. Even in the 1970s, when such mention was being made, blacks were usually referred to in

negative terms (Groff, 1963: 345; An interview ..., 1973: 688).

The above factors, singly or together, may contribute towards creating emotional and mental strain, which can manifest itself in the form of a disturbed personality, one of the facets of which may be a reluctance to read.

2.1.7 TRANSITIONAL AGE OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence and its associated problems have been a subject of intense discussion, especially during the last few decades. One of these problems is that book reading tends to decline sharply during the adolescent years among most children, even when the habit has been firmly established (cf. also 5.1.1).

The literature cites various reasons for this decline. These range from the personal problems arising from early school leaving, the move to senior school and the feeling of inadequacy when faced with selecting from among adult books to the more general problems, such as the dearth of writers for the adolescent and reluctant publishers. An attempt will be made to examine these problems in respect of their possible influence on reader reluctance.

Early school leaving often brings with it the worries and excitement of the prospect of going into the working world which may affect the child's ability to concentrate. If he reads at all it is likely to be what Chambers calls 'drug' literature, such as the books of Enid Blyton and W.E. Johns.

This type of escapist literature, if destined to play only a temporary role in the child's reading behaviour, is generally considered harmless, but is nevertheless to be regarded as a manifestation of reluctance (Chambers, 1969: 18).

Unless the reading habit has been acquired, reading skills tend to atrophy owing to disuse. Landy (1977: 379) claims that 30% of Canadians who have achieved a level of education of only Grade 8 or lower i.e. the eighth year of formal schooling in Canada, are 'functionally illiterate' in the sense of not being able to master the reading skills necessary for dealing with the signs and other communication symbols of their environment, or with basic employment requirements.

For those who are not early school leavers, the move to senior school is generally a period of trauma and new challenges. There is an awakening awareness of sex, a rejection of authority and the realization that adults are not infallible. Coupled with this is a strong sense of affinity to the group and the emergence of concern in making decisions for the future. Such unsettling factors do not promote the conditions of concentration and repose necessary for reading (Chambers, 1969: 18).

The adolescent often feels lost among adult books and there seems to be little creative fiction of good quality to satisfy his needs. Having been supplied for years with an abundance of good children's literature, the adolescent

finds himself faced with a range of adult books conceptually beyond his experience and maturity. He may find such books boring and frustrating, deciding that they are not relevant to his needs. The adolescent will probably feel himself to be academically and culturally deficient when he sees that some of his peers seek and derive enjoyment from these very books. He does not, however, realize that they are written on a level of maturity beyond his personal development (Chambers, 1969: 18, 80) (cf. also 3.3.3.1).

Another problem facing the adolescent is that writers and publishers often assume that young people will read adult books before they are far into their teens, without stopping to consider whether these will meet the needs of the adolescent. At this period of his life he requires assistance in dealing with the problems which assail him as he emerges from the chrysalis of childhood. It is the producers of the mass media, rather than the book publishers, however, who appear to recognize this need, stepping into the gap and capturing the teenage market (Chambers, 1969:,72-80, 134).

Writers who earnestly wish to write for this age group are often frustrated by the absence of discrimination among publishers, and, as a consequence, find themselves restricted financially. A further contributing factor is that many who control the purse strings do not acknowledge that children's books, i.e. books designed for 6-to 14-year olds, will not satisfy the teenager. They therefore often refuse to purchase books with themes which they consider harmful to the

adolescent (Chambers, 1969: 18, 92).

Why this censorious attitude is adopted in the face of the reality that adolescents are exposed daily to themes far more disturbing when they read newspapers or watch television, is a subject for conjecture. In fact, it is these same people who often encourage newspaper reading, having disregarded their qualms and concentrating solely on what they consider to be the greater good which is to be derived from this activity, i.e. the acquiring of knowledge of world events. Such adults do not seem to appreciate that books (both fiction and non-fiction) can also purvey such knowledge (Chambers, 1969: 70-1, 80-1).

It may be true that most aspiring writers experience great difficulty in writing for the adolescent, since the ability to write successfully for the teenage market necessitates having lived through the 'teenage culture', which is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon. Writers who had been teenagers during this period, Chambers notes, had begun to put pen to paper and were beginning to fill this literary gap with books of a quality which was somewhat better than those which had been put forward until that time as teenage literature (Chambers, 1969: 97) (cf. also section 4.3.4.1).

Because of their non-recognition of the teenage market, publishers have as a rule failed to establish editorial departments designed to cater for the teenager. Moreover, they have tended not to direct their advertising to this market because they are afraid for financial reasons to promote new

authors in this field (Chambers, 1969: 134).

Chambers speculates that if books were to be published and advertised as being for the adolescent, as opposed to the pre-teenager, it is likely to contribute significantly towards removing the restrictions placed on them by editors and buyers who fear their intrusion into the under 12 market (Chambers, 1969: 141). The literature surveyed would seem to be in agreement that adolescents have many problems to overcome, including a reluctance to read. Unless they can be encouraged to continue reading during this period of development such reluctance may become a lifetime habit.

2.2 PARENTAL AND OTHER HOME INFLUENCES

Many parents, according to Anderson, are largely unaware of the value of reading. Some may even go so far as to prohibit reading, arguing that it interferes with the activity of study. Even those who are aware often mismanage the matter, antagonizing their children against themselves and books alike (Anderson, 1940: 256; Roe, 1964: 3; Roe, 1965: 15). In a series of unpublished lectures on children's reading given at Winter School through the auspices of the University of Cape Town's Department of Extra-mural Studies in 1979, David Donald warned that in the absence of parental involvement reading may have no significance for the child, but may well be regarded as an unpleasant school-based task.

Although heredity cannot be disregarded in the part it plays in physical growth and intellectual development, it is the

home and the family which appear to be mainly responsible for the child's achieving his potential abilities. It is here that he is most likely to be stimulated, his life structured, his personality, attitudes and behaviour moulded and his interests given direction (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 27).

2.2.1 IMITATION

Children tend to learn by imitation, and their parents are probably the earliest influence in their lives. If these parents do not read books in the normal course of living the child will in all likelihood see no one whose habit of book reading can be imitated until he reaches school going age. According to an article by one of the heads of UNESCO (A third of the world's children, 1967: 4205) there were, at that time, 700 million adults who were either functionally (cf. Landy 2.1.7.) or totally illiterate, i.e. 'ignorant of letters or literature' (The Shorter Oxford English dictionary, 1955: 956), while only one third of all children of school-going age had schooling facilities available to them. A plea is put forward for more money to be spent on education instead of on such things as armament.

These statistics are not confined to the non-industrial countries of Asia, Africa and South America, however. Audrey Adams (1973:152) claims that at that time there were 2 1/2 million adults in Britain who were functionally illiterate. A later figure of at least 10%, being some 3 1/2 million

adults is put forward in a report published by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, based on a survey of 12,500 23-year-olds (Simonite, 1983).

The figures cited for South Africa are far greater. In 1980, according to Dr. Robin Lee, director of planning and development at the Urban Foundation, there were 4 million people over the age of 19 with no formal education. A further 3,8 million had 7 or fewer years of schooling. Thus 8 million adults over the age of 19 were less than fully literate. He added that at that time 34% of the population had only achieved a primary school education while 40% of the population had no formal education at all (The Argus, 1983: 9).

These figures imply that many children will grow up in an environment completely without reading matter and with parents who will be unable to give them any guidance or display any reading behaviour which would make the activity of reading seem normal to them. If Gladys Williams (1971: 31) has sufficient grounds for asserting that spending time with a book is not a natural activity, the absence of anyone to imitate may well be a causative factor in the creation of the reluctant reader.

Many parents who stress the importance of reading are observed by their children often to pay no more than lip service to such values, the parents themselves preferring such activities as television-viewing to reading. It may be queried whether parents are not perhaps setting double

standards in that event, because even when parents actually read, their reading material is often escapist literature, magazines or newspapers (Alm, 1962: 104; Cashdan, 1969: 8; Wickham, 1977: 14).

A great number of children consider that despite their parents' inactivity as readers such parents are not only well-adjusted, but appear to be more successful than others with whom these children come into constant contact, such as teachers and librarians, who encourage reading. Children who model themselves on such parents would consequently have no good reason for submitting to the discipline of reading (Dupee, 1956: 5; Wickham, 1977: 14).

The question of imitation will be dealt with in detail in the following subsections and under various other pertinent headings such as 3.2.8 further on in this survey.

2.2.2 **STATUS** (cf. also 3.2.14 and 3.3.2.1.2.3)

That status symbols of different kinds loom largely in today's world is clearly evident from the orientation of most advertising. If enjoyment of reading is not regarded as being an asset the incidence of reluctant reading will in all probability increase.

Gordon Dupee expresses this notion in a passage which suggests that reading does not feature prominently among contemporary 'status' activities in the USA:

> "Jonny is likely to do what is honored in his own home and what is honored in the society of which he is becoming aware. And ours is a society which

> does not honor reading. We turn our own depreciation of reading to indignation, and blame the school" (Dupee, 1956: 5).

Dupee cannot understand why Americans, who are obsessed with diet and health, pay so little attention to mental nutrition (Dupee, 1956: 6). Elmo Roper corroborates this common American viewpoint when he observes that although baseball is esteemed, the fostering of and taking a pride in exceptional intellectual talent is not part of the American tradition (Roper, 1960).

If reading is not relevant to the lifestyle of the home and the society in which the person lives and if it is accorded a low status rating as an activity, this will influence the child's propensity to read (McClellan, 1977: 45-6).

Reading is often regarded as being a status symbol among the 'middle classes' i.e. white-collar workers, professionals and businessmen. Many of the 'lower classes' i.e. blue-collar workers, unskilled labourers and the unemployed, (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 2-3) appear to regard it as being alien to their society (Smith, 1971: 15). The result of this is that middle-class children who reject the value systems of their parents and their environment, may reject reading at the same time, whereas lower-class children may not even regard it as being an activity worthy of any consideration at all (Cleary, 1972: 33).

It would appear, therefore, that the literature is unanimous in concluding that people usually tend to conform in valuing that which is well-regarded in the society in which they

live. Therefore, if the activity of reading is not regarded thus, it will not be undertaken readily.

2.2.3 SEX BIAS

Research has revealed that there is a tendency for boys to read less than girls (Le Roux, 1943: 19) except in the case of newspapers (Mulder, 1976: 35). The reasons for this may derive from a sexual bias in the attitude towards reading as an activity, and towards the corresponding image the librarian, who is regarded by many as the chief protagonist of this activity, has in the eyes of modern society.

Many people, observes Leng (1968: 118) in a book published in Wales, regard reading as an activity more suitable for girls than for boys. Roe writes that the same bias is discernible in Australian culture where parents commonly associate reading with girls but consider sport a more acceptable activity for boys. If boys favour reading as a leisure pastime, they may often be teased and regarded as oddities. He suggests that the relative dearth of male librarians in schools and public libraries contribute to the image of reading as an essentially female activity (Roe, 1965: 19-21, 30).

The allegation that sex bias is a causative factor in the complexity of reasons which affect the incidence of reluctant reading is generally supported in the literature.

2.2.4 **ATTITUDE TO FICTION** (cf. also 3.2.11)

Even if reading is an acceptable activity in a home such acceptance does not always encompass fiction.

Many adults regard the reading of factual rather than fictional material as an indication of intellectual superiority. They are often unable to differentiate between imagination, unreality and mistruths and therefore consider that listening to stories is a waste of time (Williams, 1971: 28). Such adults will tend to influence their children to read only non-fiction and to develop in their children a contempt for fiction.

If the reading of fiction not only has no status in a child's home, but is actively discouraged, it is unlikely that such a child will develop a desire to read for pleasure.

2.2.5 **LANGUAGE DEFICIENCY** (cf. also 3.2.6)

A knowledge of the meaning of words is the basic tool needed for reading, for if the child is unable to comprehend the individual words which combine to make up the sentences which he reads he will probably find it difficult to derive pleasure from the story which these sentences unfold and will tend to reject reading as an activity alien to his life-style.

For the first time since Gutenberg, children are now growing up in what Larrick (1967: 3815) refers to as an "oral language culture". They receive words by ear and become, she

suggests, used to a harsh, dramatic language, stripped of beauty.

The quality of the speech patterns heard by the child is of importance, because

> "...when the talk is limited, anaemic, verbally and tonally narrow ...a deprivation occurs that will later show itself in difficulties in learning to read, in writing, in coping with social situations where speech is cardinal" (Chambers, 1973: 17).

These factors may adversely affect reading. There seems to be a direct correlation between poor language development, poor reading and a non-verbal environment, in which very often the speech heard may be commands, such commands usually being orders to be quiet. Furthermore, unless children are trained to discriminate among sounds, they experience difficulty in discriminating among the visual symbols which constitute the vehicle of the printed text (Chambers, 1973: 17; Smith, 1971: 13) (cf. also 2.2.8).

Slang tends to abound in the speech of modern children and their vocabulary and idiom are often fully understood only by their peers. Accordingly, such children conclude generally that authors of children's books live in a world which is alien to their own, writing in a language equally foreign to them. Unless such children can have it demonstrated to them that the printed word is akin to their own, they may well become reluctant readers. Words do not mean the same to all people and a great deal is missed if the reader's background is vastly different from the author's, e.g. for some

it is a mark of respect not to look someone in the eye, while for others it is an indication of being shifty. The vocabulary of the average child in the lower socio-economic groups of industrial society is not that of the middle class towards whom eduction tends to be directed (Berger, 1970: 254; Fader & McNeil, 1969: 74; Robinson, 1962: 16).

Children who have not developed a 'pattern of expectancy and counter-expectancy', i.e. of surprise, which is the crux of all storytelling, will be slow in learning syntactical skills. Children who do not affect their environment, i.e. those of whom no notice is taken in respect of their opinions or attempts at learning to speak, tend to stop trying. If the families are too busy or too preoccupied with their own affairs to notice them, they will generally be slow in learning to speak, a factor which may in turn result in a limited vocabulary (Bodgers, 1969: 404) (cf. also 2.2.8.3). The problem is common to all strata of society. Parents of the poor may be unable to provide a suitable academic environment, while children of wealthy families may be brought up by nannies who care for the material wants rather than the cultural needs of the children in their charge (Smith, 1971: 11).

The lower classes (cf. 2.2.2) tend to express themselves, more often than not, in concrete rather than abstract terms. Therefore, the child who is unused to thinking in abstract terms, experiences difficulty in dealing with new ideas and in following an imaginative story (McClellan, 1977: 45). How-

ever, Chambers does not seem to consider this a permanent problem, for he notes that according to Piaget's thesis, the stage of concrete thinking (being pre-puberty) is an essential 'preliminary to abstract and deductive thought' in the development of the child (Chambers, 1973: 26).

Excessive reading of comics, common to all strata of society, may also cause language deficiency, because all the emphasis is visual and the child, while knowing the meaning of a word, may be unable to read or spell it (Wertham, 1955: 125).

Although language deficiency may be a contributing cause of the child's reluctance to read, it appears to be a deficiency which in the case of certain children may not be permanent and may merely constitute a stage in the child's development.

2.2.6 **LITERARY EXPERIENCE** (cf. also 3.2.1, 3.2.6 and 3.3.2.2.2)

There is general agreement in the literature surveyed that one of the root causes of reluctant reading appears to be an absence of early storytelling experience.

> "Reading is something that begins, like charity, at home and it begins - or should begin - early in life" (Chambers, 1969: 10).

In expressing this thought, Chambers echoes the views and attitudes of many writers on children's reading. It is through listening to words spoken aloud that children usually acquire a love of language and literature. It is

usually from storytelling that children acquire the ability to listen (Chambers, 1973: 43-4; Robinson, 1962: 16).

In a short article Chambers asserts that it is difficult to read words which one has never heard expressed aloud. Without oral storytelling and easy access to books children may have great gaps in their literary development (Chambers, 1977(a): 569). This deficiency can affect their ability to become creative readers (Chambers, 1969: 10).

(Early storytelling will be dealt with more fully later in section 3.2.1).

2.2.7 MODERN ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the modern home is partly responsible for the origin and development of reluctant reading among children. Homes tend to be open-planned, making it difficult for the child to find a quiet corner in which to curl up and read.

Although silence is not a requisite for reading, concentration is an essential requirement for the activity and is most difficult to achieve in the midst of family movements. Television imposes its sound throughout the living rooms and the bedroom, often cold, to which the child retires to seek privacy, may seem very isolated (Chambers, 1969: 11-12).

In an investigation conducted in Australia, Dunkle (1974: 244) found that children who were sent to their rooms to read, normally regarded the command as a form of punishment. As a rule, the child will tend to take the line of least

resistance, allowing any desire he had for reading to suffocate and become a reluctant reader. Chambers comments that "...This is not reluctance, it is the slow murder of a natural response" (Chambers, 1969: 12).

Unless a reluctance to read is to become a habit it would seem necessary for those living in such houses to create a period of tranquillity during each day.

2.2.8 **DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN** (cf. also 2.1.1., 2.2.5, 2.3.1.1, 3.3.1.9 and 3.3.1.10)

The disadvantaged suffer from various deficiencies, many of which (e.g. lower reading skills, physical defects and emotional disturbances) may affect their propensity to becoming reluctant readers. The size of their families, their culture and their early exposure to life's brutality may also become factors influencing the incidence of reluctant reading within their midst.

Disadvantaged children tend to have lower reading skills than others. Inferior diet and frequent moving may be partly responsible for this. Parental lack of attention to and awareness of their children's physical defects, such as hearing and sight, may also be causes of reading problems (McCrossan, 1966: 3, 11-12; Robinson, 1953: 875).

In 1958 the National Birthday Trust Fund in Britain gathered information on approximately 98% of babies, born in England, Scotland and Wales during the week, 3 to 9 March, numbering some 17,000, at birth. The intention of this study was to

investigate the causes of perinatal death. It was hoped that the size of the sample would eliminate all bias (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 10).

The findings of the Plowden Commission represented the first follow-up report on these children, but were basically restricted to those living in England. The Commission published its results in an interim report 18 months after having conducted its survey, and before all the results were collated in a book, viz. the Central Advisory Council for Education's Children and their primary schools 2v. (1967) The National Children's Bureau, conducting research in Britain followed up the lives of 10,504 of those children included in the 1958 research project(cf. p. 45), obtaining information at 7 and 11 years old. They concluded that children of unskilled manual workers were more susceptible than those of middle-class parents to defects of speech and hearing but not vision, and were less likely to attend hospitals or clinics for remedial treatment (Wedge & Prosser, 1973: 9, 40-5). Their research revealed that these children were 6 times as likely to be poor readers and 15 times more likely to be non-readers than the children of professionals (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 102). Such children tended to be 17 months behind those of top professional groups (Clegg, 1973: 15-6). Even the children of parents who had left school as soon as they were able, and who were not necessarily unskilled workers, were found to be 6 months behind the children of educated parents as a

rule (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 36-7).

In the same research they deduced that certain symptoms related to emotional factors, such as stammering and aggression, were more likely to be present in the disadvantaged child, although overt aggression may be attributed to the fact that such behaviour is more acceptable at home (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 92-3, 143-6).

It was concluded, finally, that children of the lower-classes were more likely to belong to larger families and that they were seldom likely to hear coherent sentences spoken in their homes (cf. also 2.2.8.3). Overcrowding and lack of basic amenities, which often went hand in hand, had the effect respectively of 2-3 months' and 9 months' retardation in reading at the 7-year old level (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 30-2, 55-6).

The culture of the disadvantaged usually has an anti-intellectual element. Such children are without school 'know-how', such as test-taking ability (McCrossan, 1966: 10-2). Allison Davis asserted in 1960 that despite attempts by American educationalists to make I.Q. tests culturally unbiased, the tests as a matter of course reflect middle-class vocabulary and middle-class values and do not accurately convey the capacity of more than half the children in American public schools. Furthermore, the disadvantaged child tends to score badly, hence receiving an education aimed at a level far below that reflecting their innate capacity (Davis, 1965: 38-46, 63-5, 88-90, 95-6).

Writing in the era of the American civil-rights movement which led to disintegrated education at the end of the 1960s, McCrossan (1966: 10-2) maintained that the typical attitude of the disadvantaged child to schooling at the time was ambivalent, even alienated, because of the manifestations of discrimination encountered within the school walls. He tended to evince behavioural problems, often becoming labelled as a failure which, in turn, resulted in feelings of hatred towards others, and being hated in return (Larrick, 1967: 3815). Larrick claims that even when such children were given improvement programs (such as Head Start, for example - an aspect which will be examined in a further section of this thesis (cf. 3.3.1.2)) - they often slipped back as a result of poor standards of teaching or an inability to deal with the middle-class patterns of behaviour expected at school.

The disadvantaged child tends to spend a large part of his life playing in the streets and therefore is often exposed to rioting and firm police action, generally believed to be selective. In the case of the black American children of the 1960s, they were usually conscious of the objectives of the civil rights movement. Thus they were made aware of the inadequate education which they were receiving, leading to their involvement in protest. This was a new world with new interests which had to be taken into account if books were to form part of it (Larrick, 1967: 3815).

An article in Time (1980: 54-63) suggests that inadequate

education is as much a problem of the eighties as it was in the sixties and that it is confined neither to blacks nor to the disadvantaged at large, thus challenging prevailing opinion in the 1960s.

Children are willing to recognize violence and deal with it. They tend to consider innocence a deliberate avoidance of reality. Within an urban setting there is little chance of giving vent to their frustrations. Consequently such children often look to books to learn about the nature of their feelings and how best to cope with them. Therefore, if the slum child reads in books only about 'nice' children in 'nice' homes, he is likely to become so alienated by a sense of frustration that he will resist the inclination or expectation to read (Bodgers, 1969: 406) (cf. also 3.3.3.3.4).

Studies have indicated that children brought up in an environment in which they have been exposed to very few stimuli will tend not to respond to pictures and photographs in books because such graphic representations are beyond their ken (Bodgers, 1969: 406). They are locked in their own subculture, removed from the flow of popular information. Those who live in such informational ghettoes, by and large, do not realize from what need their problems stem. Even when they become engaged in an informational search it is not generally an active one (Childers, 1975: 32, 42).

Book purchasing, magazine subscriptions and leisure reading are almost unknown in the homes of the disadvantaged (Cleary, 1972: 27).

The economic and social factors which are usually common to the disadvantaged and may be the cause of reader reluctance are summed up thus by Sir Alec Clegg in his

Recipe for Failure

> "Take one child. Strip away its sympathetic home life and allow to simmer in disregard for five years. Place in an educational cauldron with the following ingredients;
>
> Two part-time parents;
> (or two ambitious parents) to taste;
> One eleven-plus failure;
> Six hard-pressed teachers;
> One poor urban authority.
>
> Garnish well with an uninspiring neighbourhood. Bring to the boil at fifteen or sixteen and turn out into society" (Clegg, 1972: cover).

The problems of the disadvantaged appear to influence the incidence of reluctant reading, tending also to affect the level of education attained. These children, if they have become reluctant readers and have achieved only a low level of education, will probably become part of a vicious circle when they themselves become parents.

2.2.8.1 **Lack of reading material**: (cf. also 2.11 and 3.3.1) The lack of reading material in a child's life may be due to a diversity of reasons and it appears that these are not exclusive to the disadvantaged. The provision of reading material on a regular basis is expensive. Therefore, unless borrowing facilities exist, the disadvantaged child is usually deprived of reading matter (McClellan, 1977: 46). As paperbacks are cheaper than hardcover books, they help bring

book buying within the reach of most budgets (Cleary, 1972: 17). However, Jessen considers that the eagerness of patrons in the Bulawayo (Rhodesia) black townships proved that there was a great economic need for a free public library service at the time of his investigation (Jessen, 1973: 24).

It is not only economics which governs the non-existence of reading material within the homes of the disadvantaged: interest is acknowledged as being of equally great importance. Children who live cheek by jowl, surrounded by the hurly-burly of life, usually develop extravert personalities, tending to prefer pursuits more physically active than reading. A personality trait such as excessive extraversion can adversely influence the child's propensity to read. Parents of these children usually pay scant attention to reading. Moreover, such parents do not generally encourage their children to read, thereby providing neither interest nor motivation (Gray, 1956: 13). Finally, even if these parents buy books for themselves,they are often reluctant to spend money on children's books (Milam, 1932: 30).

While working with the Tiwi in Australia Robin Hempel found that, even when books were available for borrowing new obstacles emerged. Being unused to possessing books, the children tended to lose or damage them. They did, however, appear to derive enjoyment from looking at books, tidying them and listening to stories being read aloud. He concludes that it is cultural deprivation rather than intellectual ability which places children in the slower learning group. This in

turn, as discussed earlier in this chapter, may adversely affect their desire to become readers (Hempel, 1977: 96).

It is not only the disadvantaged, however, who are denied freedom of access to reading material. Herbert Lottman wrote in 1966 that the censorship of books published for children in France was very strict at the time. He claimed that the French had published nothing worthwhile for children during the preceding fifty years (i.e. 1915-1965) and that although books were cheap, the standard of public libraries was so poor that children were not being encouraged to love books (Lottman, 1966: 5709-10, 5712).

Whether the causes of the problem are due to economics, lack of interest, personality traits or availability, there would seem to be 1 overriding factor to remember, viz. that expertise in any field is acquired through practice. Children need to manipulate a spoon if they are to learn to feed themselves, so too there is the need to handle and explore reading material if they are to develop into experts at reading (Archer, 1963: 424).

2.2.8.2 **Place to read**: Living within the organization of an advanced society in which literacy is taken for granted, children are usually taught to read. There are, however, 2 aspects to reading being either to acquire information or to cultivate one's emotional development.

> "It is useful to get information, it is, crucial to grow up a person ...Reading of this kind needs peace and time ..." (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977:

358).

Undertaking research on the likes and dislikes of children in England, G.A. Carter (1947: 219) found that bed was the preferred place of reading. (A more detailed outline of this research will be given in 2.3.3.3.3).

Investigating the reading habits of Coloured children in South Africa, Du Preez (1974: 245) found that although 76.1% of these children preferred to read in their own bedrooms, only 28.1% of them did not have to share with others. However, Schauffer's research in 1968 into the reading habits of South African Indian high-school children established that, contrary to his own expectations, children who were avid readers often shared bedrooms with 3 to 4 others, and that most often those who read least had separate bedrooms (Schauffer, 1968: 140).

In research undertaken in 1955 into the interest of books of children between the ages of 10 and 11, Carsley (1957: 17), found that these children's preferred place of reading was at home, and that it was the books read there which received the highest rating by the respondents.

Although the home may be the preferred place of reading it may not always provide favourable conditions for reading. Overcrowded conditions of living, in themselves, may adversely affect reading progress. It is difficult for the disadvantaged child to find a place conducive to reading where he may escape the noise and movement of the family and its visitors (Chambers, 1973: 18).

For the child of the black townships in the early 1970s of what was then Rhodesia another very real problem was added. Darkness falls, sometimes as early as 6 o'clock, and most homes lacked lighting. Accordingly, it was not uncommon to see young people attempting to study under street lights. Moreover the constant visiting of the extended family added to the problem of privacy facing these children (Russell, 1973: 37).

The literature surveyed, with the exception of Schauffer's work, agrees that a lack of privacy affects reading progress. The fact that Schauffer's observations which pertain to a society unused to allowing children to have their own bedrooms and in which it is not uncommon for 3 generations to share 1 house, do not concur with those made by the rest of the literature, suggests that other socio-cultural factors may be of more importance than the lack of space to read.

2.2.8.3 **Size of family**: (cf. also 2.2.5) Reluctant reading among children may result directly from the size of their families. It has been found that they often lack both time and privacy and are deficient in language development. Children from a large family (defined as comprising 4 or more children) often need to look after siblings, they usually have more children with whom to play and as a rule lack privacy (Leng, 1968: 125-6). By and large these children have less opportunity than those from smaller families to have sustained conversation with adults and thus to

develop mature speech patterns. Moreover, children from large families mostly lack that one-to-one relationship characteristic of the parent reading to 1 child alone (Chambers, 1973: 17-8). They probably also are deprived of the cuddling which may accompany this relationship and which is considered to be important in the development of the reader during these formative years (Duff, 1956: 33).

(The notion that these factors form part of the foundation stones in the development of the idea that reading is a pleasurable experience will be discussed under the section relating to parental influence in Chapter 3).

Family size and its attendant problems were found by Leng (1968: 126) to affect the reading of the girls only marginally, but that the effect was significant in respect of the boys. He therefore concluded that gender, rather than large families, was the predominant factor.

A contrasting view emerged from a report produced by a National Child Development Study in 1972 of 7-year-olds (cf. 2.2.8) in which it was held that if children came from large families (i.e.5 or more children) they would, on average, be as much as 1 year behind those from smaller families in reading attainment. Large families were more common among the working classes. As a result they often tended to live in overcrowded houses, thus exacerbating the problem described above. This would be further compounded if the family was poor financially and limited linguistically (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 29-39).

Research undertaken in Aberdeen, Scotland between 1949 and 1965 on nearly 3,000 children tested at the ages of 7,9,11 and 12 on verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and attainment tests, revealed that the size of the family on test scores appear to have less effect among the upper- than among the lower-classes. This seems to confirm the National Child Development Study's opinion that other environmental factors may also affect the issue (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1967: 188-93).

Although all the literature sources which have been surveyed are in agreement as to the observation that girls read more than boys, only McCrossan (1966: 27-8) discusses this in relation to other social factors, and even he discusses reader interests as distinct from interest in reading. According to him most tests reveal that differences between the reading interests of boys and girls are far greater than those between black and white American children or between children of different socio-economic levels.

However, the literature generally supports the viewpoint while not dealing specifically with the size of the family, tends to relate reader reluctance to socio-economic causes which usually prevail in large families.

These viewpoints are surveyed throughout this section on disadvantaged children and also in other sections of this survey.

2.2.8.4 Tower-block isolation: Tower-block housing, an urban

izing. Previously, the typical child would either play in the garden, the mother keeping a watchful eye from the kitchen, or if the child lived in a tenement in the semislum conditions common to all the large cities of the world the street in which they played could be watched by either their mother or interested neighbours. Today, although both these types of dwellings are still prevalent, apartments in high-rise buildings have become home for a great many people.

As a result of this many children have to remain in their apartments because it is unsafe for them to go out and play on their own and the mother lacks the time to accompany them.

The old neighbourliness is gone, there is a constant change of tenants and instead of the group concern which used to exist, people do not even know who are living in the apartment nest door. Many of the mothers work and instead of living in a secure environment, children are exposed to chaotic stimulation (Adams, 1973: 152; Cleary, 1972: 31) (cf. also 3.3.3.4.7).

Children growing up in such isolation, often ignored by busy parents, may be deprived of the opportunity of learning to speak or play properly or of holding a book in their hands until they go to school (Adams, 1973: 152). A new type of personality is emerging, one which is not a product of family and neighbourhood but can be directly attributed to the urban way of life (Cleary, 1972: 31).

2.3 COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

The influence contributing towards the creation of the reluctant reader are not only those which the child encounters within the limited environment of the home, for no one ordinarily lives in total isolation. The 2 educational institutions within the community which tend to play the major part in the child's life in regard to reading behaviour are the school and the public library, and their influence will be dealt with at great length in the next 2 chapters, as well as in this one.

2.3.1 SCHOOL

The child's school experiences colour his attitude towards reading (McClellan, 1977: 46). In fact, Dupee (1956: 5) states that many parents blame the school for all the educational problems of their children. This, however, does not appear to be quite valid, as it should be remembered that the child spends a minor part of his waking hours within the walls of the school. According to Larrick (1956: 158) referring to American children, this constituted "approximately 16% of their waking hours" at the time of writing. However, when we consider the factors which contribute towards the creation of the reluctant reader the school appears to be by no means blameless as a general rule. In the light of projections such as these, i.e. as put forward by Adams (1973: 152), in terms of which she predicts that 23% of Liverpool's school-leavers will probably be function-

ally illiterate (i.e., their literacy not being sufficient to render them employable), it would seem that a very serious look should be taken into the existing educational system.

2.3.1.1 A middle-class agency: (cf. also 3.3.2.2.4 and 3.3.2.6) Findings by the National Children's Bureau in Britain and findings derived from other research indicate that the child's success at school is more dependent on home and peer influences than on the method and means of education within the school. This may be so because the educational system in Britain tends to make the school a middle-class agency favouring middle-class children (Adams, 1973: 152). (The difficulties of finding that school has little relevance to his cultural circumstances, and of adapting to the norms of his formal education have already been described in the section on disadvantaged children (cf. 2.2.8)). However, research and debate continue and the issues relating to the interplay between nature and nurture in regard to behaviour, i.e. cause and effect remain unresolved (Cleary, 1972: 24; McCrossan, 1966: 12).
Referring to education in the lower-class areas of the big American cities, Cleary maintains that it is in crisis. She found that both the buildings and classroom relationships tended to be cold and impersonal and that schools not only failed to provide meaningful learning but also could be deemed partly responsible for the maladjustment of youth

(Cleary, 1972: 31). She does, however, qualify this assertion by stating that attempts are being made to rectify the position, and that the schools need every possible assistance in order to effect them.

If the school does not take into account the home life of the working-class child and shows little interest and understanding of the circumstances in which these children spend the largest part of their lives, such children may be forced into the position of having to live in 2 completely separate worlds. Richard Hoggart (1958: 296-304) writes of the dilemma which faces the working-class child, should he find himself in a grammar school. He will possibly feel himself to be alien in terms of both speech and vocabulary. He may be ashamed of his literary background and embarrassed to bring books home, because his family might scoff at him, on the assumption that the standards which the child has honoured since babyhood are found to be wanting. Chambers suggests that such a child may either try to remodel himself on this new environment or end up by rejecting both home and school as being equally inadequate, thereby becoming a sufferer of what has been termed educational schizophrenia. Even if the child's educational experience can be made to be happy and content this may not solve his learning problems. He still needs to know not only how to learn, but what has to be learned, a new spoken language often being one of these necessities (Bernstein, 1961: 165). One of the experiments conducted in an attempt to eliminate the feeling of strange-

ness among school pupils is the modern approach of differentiated education, i.e. providing for the mechanically skilled but academically disinclined on the one hand and the gifted child on the other, in such countries as South Africa, the USA and Britain. The literature does not appear to discuss the effect of such an approach in terms of reader reluctance, but it is hoped that this would remove the feeling of being alienated from the school environment for at least part of the school population. It might also help to eradicate a certain percentage of any alleged or real middle-class bias which would appear to be one of the factors which increase the incidence of reader reluctance.

2.3.1.2 <u>Ignoring reading readiness</u>: The literature seems to be in in agreement about the fact that not all children are ready to read at the same age. Many children, at the time of entering school, do not wish to read and still struggle to acquire a vocabulary which will enable them to communicate with others outside their immediate environment. As reading readiness and literacy are associated subjects it would seem appropriate to give a more elaborate definition of the levels of literacy at this point.

The most fundamental definition would be that it is the ability to read and write but the skills of reading and writing have many levels. Kesting (1980: 150, 155-6) suggests that the functional (or passive) and creative (or active) are the 2 main categories in assessing collective levels of lite-

racy. These in turn, are divided into 3 levels and he defines them in order of sophistication, and attempts to equate them with levels of formal education. The latter, being a broad collective means of equation, is only a rough guide because individuals may, through self-motivation and natural ability improve their level of literacy.

> "**Elementary Functional Literacy (EFL)**: The ability to master the alphabet of a person's primary language to the extent that signs and posters (e.g. traffic signs, neon lights, and newspaper posters) can be understood and that simple sign language can be produced.
> **Intermediate Functional Literacy (IFL)**: The ability to read simple texts (such as operating instructions or manuals for appliances, dialogues in comics, etc.) and to write simple messages in purely functional situations.
> **Advanced Functional Literacy (AFL)**: The ability to read and write more complex, but still mainly functional texts.
> **Elementary Creative Literacy (ECL)**: The ability to begin reading more complex texts, and to write such texts with a marked degree of independent thought.
> **Intermediate Creative Literacy (ICL)**: The ability to read complex texts in one's primary and secondary languages with some critical insight and to write texts displaying original thinking of advanced degree.
> **Advanced Creative Literacy (ACL)**: This level of literacy implies a sophisticated ability to read texts in more than one language with critical insight and to write texts considered worthy of the attention of scholars" (Kesting, 1980: 155).

These levels are equated with

> "EFL: the successful completion of the fourth year of formal education (Standard 2)
> IFL: the successful completion of the sixth year of formal education (Standard 4)
> AFL: the successful completion of the eighth year of formal education (Standard 6)
> ECL: the successful completion of the tenth year of formal education (Standard 8)
> ICL: the successful completion of the twelfth year of formal education (Standard 10)

ACL: the successful completion of a first degree at university" (Kesting, 1980: 156.

It would seem from the above that in order to read even fairly simple books it is necessary to have completed 4 years of schooling. If, however, adult books of any calibre are to be enjoyed it is necessary for the reader to have at least completed his elementary school education.

Although Kesting's definition of the levels of literacy is more lenient than that of Landy (1977: 379) (cf. 2.1.7), who claims that even after 8 years of schooling, many Canadians tend to be functionally illiterate owing to the complexities of the society in which we live, the basic definitions are the same, varying only in the number of years necessary to acquire functional literacy. The reason for the differences may be that although functional literacy may be attained during the first 6 years of schooling, it may be lost in adulthood even after 8 years of schooling as a result of disuse.

There have been other attempts to define literacy differing in criteria especially when applied to the extremes of the Third world countries and those of the industrialized West (Kesting, 1982: 55-9). The plethora of definitions could perhaps be taken as an indication of the seriousness of the problem.

It is suggested by Beron that other factors such as I.Q., physical well-being and emotional security, may also affect reading readiness (Beron, 1957: 68-77). Forcing the child to

begin to learn to read before he is emotionally and intellectually receptive may create an emotional resistance which can result in antagonism or indifference to books, thus turning enthusiasm into resentment. However, ignoring the subtle and generally intangible concept of reading readiness is just as serious. Many schools do not allow children to borrow books from the school library during their kindergarten years, although some may be already able and desirous to read. If these children are prevented from borrowing books, it is suggested that such schools are "...failing to capitalize on one of its greatest assets - the young child's eagerness to learn" (Archer, 1963: 421). Many children with a vocabulary of a minimum of 5,000 words, learn to read from books with vocabularies of 50 words. Different methods have been tried to alleviate this frustrating gap e.g. look and say, but lowering of the school entry age is an approach still to be tested (Archer, 1963: 421; An interview ..., 1978: 687; Melcher, 1973: 3110). Even if the child understands the meaning of words and pronounces them correctly, such a child may not be ready to learn, because his interpretation of the words may be incorrect:

> "He interprets what he reads on the basis of what he brings to the activity, his total environment, all extrinsic and intrinsic forces and factors that make him the individual that he is" (Cleary, 1972: 24).

If reading reluctance is not to be an ever present factor in our modern society it would seem necessary for all schools

to take cognizance of the reading readiness of their pupils and to adopt a flexible attitude as to who may and who may not borrow books from the library.

2.3.1.3 The teacher's role: The part played by the teacher in contributing to or preventing reading reluctance is discussed in much of the literature (cf. also 3.3.2.2). He is in the position to do, and are doing the most to prevent reader reluctance. Despite this, Chambers considers that they do the most to create the problem (Chambers, 1969: 117).

The teacher's influence is dependent upon such factors as his ability to be an inspired educator, his attitude towards and knowledge of books, especially children's books, and the methods he employs for studying literature and comprehension. If these are in any way lacking they may negatively affect his pupils desire to read.

Many children chafe under the restrictions of school and homework and often find themselves in trouble for reading at the wrong times. Furthermore, their enthusiasm for the written word and their flights of imagination may often be diminished through the over-strict marking of their essays by their teachers (Roe, 1964: 8). A warning is issued by Zacharre J. Clements that the uninspired educator who ignores the concept that one should "...take kids from where they are; proceed from the known to the unknown; and make it enjoyable" (An interview ..., 1973: 688), may possibly

produce children who will not wish to be learners or readers and will thus grow up to be citizens of little value to their country whose taxpayers paid the bill for their schooling.

If the attitude of the teacher towards books is negative and his knowledge of them superficial this may well have an adverse affect on his pupils (cf. also 3.3.2.2 and 3.3.2.2.1-3.3.2.2.4). Children often consider the teacher to be the be-all and end-all of their scholastic perceptions, and unless a pupil is encouraged by the teacher to check facts cited during lessons in books, the child will tend to rely on the teacher as the sole source of information instead of acquiring the habit of referring to original sources (Roe, 1965: 16).

This problem seems to be particularly severe in the case of black Rhodesian children, writes Russell (1973: 37) because they are usually brought up within an authoritarian tradition. They therefore tend not only to rely on, but to expect, their teacher to provide all the answers, and it is unusual for them to use books voluntarily for individual enquiry.

Unfortunately no comparative studies could be found in order to ascertain whether Russell's assertion that an authoritative type up-bringing significantly affected the children's perception of the teacher as being an omnipotent human being.

Reading requires the expending of a great deal of effort.

For this reason it is necessary for the child to be made to realize that such effort will prove worthwhile if he perseveres. Moreover, if teachers do not appear to regard books as educational aids of prime importance, their pupils will be unlikely to consider books as having significance in their own lives (Chambers, 1973: 3; Cohen, 1976: 714).

Although finding it difficult to understand, Alice Bryan revealed that a group of American educators in the pre-World War II period believed that reading was a substitute activity inferior to real life. They disapproved of a spectator type of existence and preferred to keep children away from books until they were 9 or 10 (Bryan, 1939: 7-8).

Some 4 decades later than Bryan's study, S. Alan Cohen (1976: 714) still found some American teachers reluctant to allow their pupils to read books as a fundamental learning activity; instead these teachers preferred using reading kits and work books, thereby operating without an educational program which put the emphasis on the act of reading. Such teachers tended to prefer lecturing rather than allowing children to explore the realities of the world extending beyond formal classroom reading.

Some teachers know little about children's books and their evalution. In fact, they tend to be a profession of reluctant readers. The fault appears to lie with the colleges of education, which, with few exceptions, do not provide either children's libraries or lectures on children's books. Moreover, although there appears to be a

more positive interest developing in the study of children's literature there does not appear to be any college of education which instructs its students to go away and read purely for the sake of enjoyment and not for any informational purposes (Chambers, 1969: 117-9; Goldberger, 1978: 382). Chambers applauds the lecturer who instructed his students to write a novel. This is because, in his opinion, 1 of the failings of the educational system is that although teachers issue tasks to their pupils they rarely attempt such tasks themselves (Chambers, 1969: 119).

Teachers who, instead of trying to increase their knowledge, take free periods while their classes go to the library may leave the impression among their pupils that they find the library and its contents boring. Accordingly the children may begin to think that the library is not a stimulating place in which to be (Delaney, 1962: 1669). Children's responses to literature can be affected adversely by the methods employed in the study of literature. The painful dissection of texts which is required by many who consider this a method of teaching a critical appreciation of literature does not tend to encourage a love of the written word. Even the teacher may sometimes be bored by this approach and it will probably not take long before this attitude will be noticed by the pupils. Often the prose studied is in itself boring and not worth the energy expended upon it. However, the other extreme, i.e. no discussion, is also destructive because the children will often not comprehend what is read,

thus being unable to come to grips with the new values in the content (Chambers, 1977(a): 570: Gray, 1947: 2; Roe, 1965: 95-7).

The ability to teach literature presupposes a talent. This point is amplified by George Sampson, who claims that it would be better for a teacher not to teach literature, although he may be excellent at teaching other subjects, unless there is an ability to transmit an enthusiasm for books (Sampson, 1970: 121-2).

Not only are texts dissected: it appears to be fairly common practice to find extracts from literature being used for the teaching of what is known as 'comprehension'. Such teaching often assumes the form of questions which are unrelated to the meaning of the original text. It is feared that children exposed to such teaching methodology may grow up tending to regard literature as being a rather boring source material rather than something enjoyable (Chambers, 1973: 23; Libraries and the educational process, 1977: 229).

All in all it would seem that the teacher's attitude towards and usage of literature can greatly influence the child's attitude towards books. It is possible that he can foster or kill the child's curiosity and desire to be a reader.

2.3.1.4 <u>Teaching methodology</u>: The quality of teachers tends to be conditioned by the methodology which has been mastered either during or after training, as well as the system within which such teachers operate. Methodology includes the use

of textbooks, the implementation of the project system if its application is favoured, examinations and orientation towards the media. The books which pupils choose in the library, of their own free will indicate that their interests differ greatly from those presupposed by many of the preprimers and primers which are required reading in primary school. These books are designed to stimulate children to read but generally do not contain subject matter of interest to them (Smith, 1962: 43).

This problem is not exclusive to the primary school. Chambers, writing in the late sixties and early seventies found that in British secondary schools almost every subject teacher relies heavily on the use of textbooks (Chambers, 1973: 22). Instead of taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the media, he warns that the indiscriminate use of books as teaching tools by all teachers for every subject irrespective of whether it is the tool most suited to the task in hand, may lead to a situation where books are disliked, considered tiring and ultimately to an increase in the incidence of reluctant readers (Chambers, 1969: 13).

Chambers is also of the opinion that textbooks have become the burden of the desk-bound child. Children, he writes, tend not to differentiate between such burdensome books and books which have been written for their enjoyment. The predominance of textbooks in teaching also lends itself to a tendency to create the impression that books are to be read purely for the purpose of gaining information. Therefore,

children who have not been conditioned to believe that there is more than one way of reading, will probably not be tempted to read for pleasure and relaxation (Chambers, 1973: 22-3).

It is considered by C.S. Lewis that there is a difference between 'using' and 'receiving' literature. Even when the subject studied is literature, there is a tendency for teachers to analyse in great detail such matters as the writer's intent rather than to emphasize the beauty of books as works of creative fiction (Lewis, 1961; 88-94).

A method of teaching generally intended to stimulate interest is the project system (cf. also 3.3.2.2.6). This is a system whereby children, instead of relying solely on standard textbooks, refer to a variety of books, whether factual or fictional, in order to obtain information on a particular subject or aspect of a subject. Such information, acquired singly or in groups, is later compiled and presented, usually accompanied by illustrations to the teacher and often to the entire class.

Unfortunately the project system, instead of stimulating an interest in books, sometimes tends to have the reverse effect. If it is mismanaged and children are encouraged to collect snippets of literature without reference to content, putting them together to make a theme, it may mean that children will come to misunderstand the true nature and value of literature, regarding it purely as a resource and not as something to be enjoyed and contemplated (Chambers,

1973: 23).

Objecting to the project system, Roe states that this is not because it may ruin the child's enjoyment of literature (as Chambers believes), but because projects sometimes tend to be aimed at a level of comprehension which is beyond the child's capabilities, causing the child to be left with a sense of failure (Roe, 1965: 103-6).

Thus it would seem from the above (i.e. irrespective of Mulder's (1976: 29-33) conclusion on the basis of his research among Afrikaans-speaking matriculants in the Transvaal (South Africa) that project schools yielded a greater number of pupils who regarded themselves as readers), there is a definite need for such projects to be supervised with care. There is a danger that they may prove to be purely detrimental in terms of reader enthusiasm.

Examinations may also have a negative effect on reading. Pupils who achieved good marks in examinations are, according to Chambers, often reluctant readers of fiction. Having had to deal with the amount of reading required to achieve success they may have neither the time nor the enthusiasm to read for any reason other than information. Although this refers to the position in Britain, it appears that it is not any different in Australia, where Roe maintains that the Australian school syllabus tends to be excessively examination-orientated and at the time of writing (mid-1960s) that the education system tended to leave little time for private reading, thus effectively discouraging the

notion among children that reading should be an enjoyable activity in a broad educational context. A former Director of the Transvaal Education Department, South Africa, Dr. Kotzee, went even further in the early seventies and claimed that the examination system could be a destroyer of independent thinkers (Chambers, 1969; 14; Kotzee, 1973: 10; Roe, 1965: 7-8).

The dangers of a wholly book-orientated study program has been discussed earlier in this section, but as the teaching approach becomes increasingly media-reliant (cf. also 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.1.1), involving the use of such aids as videotapes, sound cassettes, records and films, there is the possibility that the "book as motivator, learning device, and reading habit maker is often left out" (Goldberger, 1978: 382). Goldberger argues that a middle path between books and media material as teaching aids must be found to avoid the nurturing of a generation of reluctant readers.

It seems apparent that it is the misapplication rather than the methodology which may cause it to have an adverse effect on pupil enthusiasm for reading.

2.3.1.5 <u>The principal's role</u>: (cf. also 3.3.2.3) Few projects in the school library planned by librarians and teachers can have any hope of success if the principal does not actively encourage, approve and participate in it.

To develop a reading program for the entire school full co-operation between every member of staff and the school

librarian is required, but this is extremely difficult if the principal is not prepared to help organize his staff so that such a program can be implemented (Cleary, 1972: 81, 83, 95).

Every pupil should have a scheduled time for reading for no purpose other than pleasure. Only if the principal allows this to become a feature of the timetable is it possible for such opportunities to be offered to the child (Chambers, 1977(a): 573). The principal has an influence on the attitude of the staff and pupils towards the librarian. If the former shows the librarian no proper respect, using him as a general factotum, the pupils will probably cease to recognize the library as a source of any educational importance (Alswang, 1976: 15).

Thus it seems that the literature is in general agreement that the principal's attitude towards books and towards the librarian and the librarian's ideas will determine the nature of the reading climate within the school environment.

2.3.1.6 Lack of library facilities: (cf. also 3.3.2.1) The question of the importance of library facilities for children and the detrimental effect of their non-availability is a subject which has been of concern to educationalists for a long time.

It is claimed by Lazar that one of the problems facing teachers and librarians in New York in the late thirties, in trying to stimulate an interest in books was the limited

facilities in schools. Libraries had insufficient money: accordingly their bookstock was inadequate, the facilities for housing the stock were likewise inadequate and the number of people capable of supervising was far short of that which was needed. Children did not receive sufficient instruction on library use, had an inadequate amount of reading time and lacked the privilege of taking books home (Lazar, 1937: 25).

At a later date (i.e. during the 1960s) figures are cited in support of the contention that in the USA 10.6 million children attended more than 40,700 schools which had no school libraries. For every 4,200 children in elementary school there was only 1 professionally trained librarian, resulting in a ratio for all schools of 1 librarian for every 1,740 children (Alm, 1962: 103). Children attending such schools may well never read because they have never been stimulated sufficiently to explore the world of books. Even as late as 1972 Cleary deplores the fact that although 98.8% of secondary schools in the United States had adequate libraries at the time of writing more than half of the elementary schools were not equipped with such facilities (although it should be noted that Cleary did comment that the situation was rapidly being remedied). Billions of dollars were being spent in the United States on the production of educational materials at the time, thereby making print readily available to the reader. She concluded that the critical problem was to find a method of ensuring the

proper use of such material and suggested a constructive reader guidance program in which the school library featured as the focal point (Cleary, 1972: 17-8).

Writing about British conditions at the time, Blishen considered that without school libraries the majority of children would never become anything but relatively reluctant readers (Blishen, 1957: 14).

Only Landy differs in any way from the opinion in the rest of the literature as to the importance or otherwise of the lack of library facilities. On the basis of detailed research in Regina, Canada, she states that to her surprise she found, on visiting the schools with the largest and the smallest number of readers, that the enthusiasm of certain of the teachers was of greater importance in influencing reading than the existence of a school library. She found the library to be adequate in the former school but exceptional in the latter. However, she does not state whether all the other schools included in her study had school libraries. In her conclusion Landy proposes a program designed to prevent the emergence of reluctant readers, a program which relies heavily on the existence within the school of both a library and a librarian (Landy, 1977: 383, 387).

So it would appear that, although Landy qualifies the importance of the quality of the school library, she, like the other writers, would consider the lack of library facilities to be an important factor in the creation of reader reluctance.

2.3.2. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

By definition the library is

> "a place set aside to contain books for reading, study or reference"

and the librarian is

> "the custodian of a library ...a dealer in books" (The shorter Oxford English dictionary, 1955: 1136).

In contemporary society library and librarian are defined more broadly. Many libraries contain not only books, but also audio-visual material, some libraries excluding books entirely. Moreover, guidance in the library materials, public relations and the handling of non-book materials is considered to be as much a part of a librarian's work as is the custody of books.

The notion that the public library may be partly responsible for the incidence of reluctant reading is perhaps an unusual one, for their role in society, in accordance with public library objectives, should theoretically be exactly the opposite. It therefore seems necessary to examine, through the literature, the reasons why the library sometimes fails in its efforts to attract people and to effect a proper match between book and reader. However, in the following chapters (cf. also 3.3.3 and 4.3.2) the literature illustrates that the circumstances discussed below tend to be the exception rather than the rule.

2.3.2.1 The public library within society: Writing about the public library system in Great Britain during World War II McColvin expounded the philosophy that

> "...the library service exists to serve ...instrument for the promotion of all or any of the activities of its readers. Therefore,...it must be catholic and all-embracing. Whenever ...it must choose between types of provisions, ...this must always be in accord with the value of the service to the individuals requiring them - not because of our own ideas or opinions of what the demands should be" (McColvin, 1942: 4-5).

The literature demonstrates that the reality of modern public library service may sometimes be at odds with these highly idealistic principles. This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as the alleged alienation of the library from the culturally deprived, the forbidding appearance of libraries, the distance people have to travel if they wish to use them and the fact that they tend not to advertise sufficiently, if at all.

2.3.2.1.1 Alienation of the library from the culturally deprived: In the western world public libraries had, tended to become very middle-class by the 1950s (cf.2.2.2) i.e. comprising individuals with an income which, although enough to provide essentials and even some extras, does not allow for income-producing investments (Gray, 1956: 12).

The upper-classes in contemporary industrialized countries in the West are defined by Gray (1956: 11) as having considerable wealth or social position which is either inherited or made through their own efforts, were also library borrowers but often preferred to purchase books if they

wished to read them. It was however the lower socio-economic group (cf. 2.2.2), being the poor manual workers, rather than the clerical, professional or commercial workers, with meagre incomes and a low incidence of home-ownership who tended to feel alienated from the public library.

Several reasons may be suggested for the middle-class orientation of the public library. The middle classes, being better educated and more literate than the lower classes, on the whole have greater self-confidence and are usually sufficiently articulate, inter alia to insist that the area in which they live has a good public library. Moreover, they tend to be conscious of the value of civic amenities, especially amenities of an educational and of a cultural nature, encouraging their children to use them. The working classes tend to become denuded of leaders, because the leading personalities within their ranks frequently find themselves being elevated to middle-class status and consequently often forget their roots and make no attempt to aid those who were formerly their peers in the class structure. To compound matters, public librarians, as a matter of course, are middle-class i.e. professional and clerical workers (Gray, 1956: 12; Hendry, 1973: 194).

Although tests have shown that the poorer the area, the less likely children are to join the public library, this may be largely due to inadequate library facilities (Leng, 1968: 122-3).

The public librarian sees in the main only those children

who come to the library of their own accord, and is often out of touch with non-readers, among whom children from disadvantaged homes predominate. Even if such children should come into the library there is usually scant knowledge of their problems and interests. Without this knowledge the librarian is seldom in a position to recommend books which will activate these children to become regular borrowers (Chambers, 1969: 17; Cleary, 1972: 60-1) (cf. also 3.3.3.3.5).

Unless special efforts are made to involve children in the lower socio-economic strata of society in library activities, they will be reluctant and ill at ease in groups of middle- and upper-class children (McCrossan, 1966: 30).

2.3.2.1.2 <u>The forbidding image of libraries</u>: (cf. also 3.3.2.1.4) People are usually unable to relax and enjoy themselves in an atmosphere which to them is intimidating. Moreover, it is unlikely that they will return to such a place voluntarily. If libraries are housed in large, old echoing buildings in which little regard has been given to comfort, children tend to feel ill at ease in such an unwelcoming atmosphere and tend to decide that their leisure hours can be better spent outside the public library. However, it is hoped by Chambers, that the erection of new modern libraries may prove a solution (Chambers, 1969: 130). An insistence on an overquiet atmosphere and such anachronistic measures as inspection of hands for cleanliness may

well cause children to avoid both libraries and reading (Chambers, 1969: 129; Cleary, 1972: 157). Again, it is hoped that this problem is being alleviated because according to the literature to be surveyed in further chapters, the modern attitude no longer countenances "places where books come first and people second" (Chambers, 1969: 129).

Children when thrust into strange surroundings tend to look for that with which they are familiar. In many British public libraries, for example, Chambers found the popular magazines and paperbacks to be absent (cf. also 4.3.2.1.2). Many libraries also outlaw the popular series writers (cf. also 4.3.4.1). Thus, he suggests, when children find little with which to associate themselves in the library they may feel disapproved of and unwanted (Chambers, 1969: 130-1).

The insufficiency or total absence of signs and clear directions except possibly Dewey numbers may further add to a child's confusion when using the public library and may cause him to feel that this is not an environment with which he can easily cope (Parish, 1978: 25).

The presence of obsolete and broken books may confirm the child's opinion that there is little of interest to be found within the library walls. It is for this reason that Parish advises that such books should be discarded or sold (Parish, 1978: 25).

It was discovered by Adele Fasick, while undertaking research in Canada among 10- to 11- year olds, that children seemed to be unaware of the fact that they could influence

the library in any way, thereby accepting or rejecting it as it was. Moreover, because they generally did not read book reviews or visit bookshops, they usually did not have the available information about books to make sound recommendations (Fasick, 1978: 343).

If the opinion of the literature is valid in that the architecture of the library buildings influence the attitudes towards reading then it would seem that Clegg, in citing the words of Sir Winston Churchill written in an article by Mr. E. Peet, the man responsible for the cleaning of some 1,200 schools, was correct. In the words of Churchill:

> "We shape our buildings and after that our buildings shape us" (Clegg, 1972: 25).

From the literature it seems apparent that a fresh and imaginative look must be taken of the physical appearance of libraries. It would seem advisable for a closer examination to be made of user needs and also of the needs of potential readers. Unless this is done it would appear unlikely that public libraries, in competition with other forms of entertainment, will be able to claim any significant amount of attention from the general public (Totterdell, 1976: 150).

2.3.2.1.3 <u>Distance from the library</u>: If libraries are a distance away from its readers this may negatively affect borrowing, especially in the case of the younger child who would thus be unable to come to the library unaccompanied by an older person.

Parents are generally apprehensive about allowing their children to go by themselves to the library, if they have to cross busy thoroughfares. These same parents are sometimes unable to accompany their children and therefore may tend to discourage regular library use (Hunt & Davitt, 1937: 91).

In places which are currently in a state of war, such as Belfast, Northern Ireland, there is the added reluctance on the part of parents because they fear that violence may erupt during the child's journey. Not only does the parents' apprehensive attitude help to foster reading reluctance but it also means that the library's role in such a society cannot be fulfilled. In an address in the capacity as chairman of the Northern Ireland branch of the Library Association, Henry Heancy had stated that this role was a

> "...positive commitment to the preservation and promotion of understanding ...to make our divided community aware that it is divided more by ignorance than knowledge, more through misunderstanding than fear, more through fear than calm assessment of reality" (cited by Jackson, 1973: 246).

It is considered that books could help the children of Belfast to rise above the unrest and to understand themselves, each other and the general situation in a spiritual sense (Jackson, 1973: 246).

Problems such as this, i.e. distance from the library appear to be very real but they are not insurmountable and there would seem to be a definite need for all possible preventative action to be examined.

2.3.2.1.4 Lack of advertising: In a world in which the average person is alerted to the existence of commodities and to his apparent need for them through the medium of advertising, books, their purchasing and reading, are a commodity which is seldom advertised in places where they can be readily seen by the man in the street.

This applies to both children's and adult books which are rarely advertised, except in book trade journals, in the more intellectual newspapers and in a few expensive magazines. In terms of availability and price, books are not usually competition in the commercial world. Moreover, booksellers and publishers make little effort to tempt the reluctant reader into looking to books for satisfying entertainment. This may be the case because books are, by and large, not only not presented as worth buying but there seems also to be little effort made, even to present them as worth browsing through (Chambers, 1969: 16-7).

Although Britain and other Western countries in the free-market system are advertisement-orientated, the popular media, such as radio and television, were by the late 1960s seldom used to promote books. It is unlikely that, on paging through any teenage magazine, any mention of books will be found, although all other forms of entertainment are usually featured. Publishers seem to rely on film and television rights to boost their revenue rather than on publicizing the books they produce; this may well be due to an attitude that

it is not quite 'nice' to advertise, and that the tried and tested methods of producing best-sellers require no fundamental changes. It is observed, furthermore, that even when the book-trade does advertise, this is generally directed at the book-trade itself and is seldom seen by the buying public (Chambers, 1969: 141-2). These reviews have an unfortunate tendency to concentrate on established writers and to review books from an adult rather than a child's viewpoint (Wintle & Fisher,, 1974: 16).

Booksellers argue that it is difficult to advertise books, in view of the great diversity of new titles. In 1969 in the United States this amounted to 29,599 new book titles being published of which 2,318 were for children (Cleary, 1972: 17-8). The number of titles published world-wide in 1970 was 546,000, a rate of 1 book every minute of every day (Landy, 1977: 379). Moreover, despite competition for leisure time from the other media, by 1975 this figure had actually increased to 600,000, with the developing countries publishing approximately half as many titles as the developed countries (Paxton, 1979: 273). Although Chambers concedes that this point of view has validity, he feels that it is possible to advertise reading as an activity so that it can become a socially acceptable pastime (Chambers, 1969: 16, 141).

The implication for children's books is that parents and children would become aware of what was available, they would be able to read reviews on these books and could therefore make a more informed selection. Last but not

least, reading and books would gain acceptability and advertising would make people aware of their need for books, as it has made them aware of such basic needs as the purchasing of deodorants.

2.3.2.2. **The 'non-free' aspect of the free public library service**: Although the public library service in Western countries is normally free of charge, there are certain penalties and privileges, such as library fines and payment for reservations, which may cost the borrower money.

Authors generally claim that fines for the late return of books are a deterrent to library use. Children may stop borrowing books once such fines have been incurred. It was reported by Evelyn Geller (1972: 741) that when the City of Baltimore in the USA decided to abolish fines, the authorities publicized their intention on radio, television, the press and in local schools' newsletters. Their strategy included the following: (a) a book of honour which was compiled for the names of those returning their books on or before the due date; (b) library borrowing was reduced to one book per borrower if a book was overdue but on its return privileges were reinstated; and (c) librarians were present to explain the procedure.

It was found that fines had not improved the prompt return of books. Geller concludes that the abolition of fines for overdue books was a worthwhile step forward, especially because it implied recognizing the importance of borrowing

books without fear (Geller, 1972: 743-4).

In research undertaken among British children in 1955 Carsley (1957: 17) found that they claimed to have lost interest in the public library largely because of fines and because of payment demanded for damage done to books by younger siblings.

When children had to pay fines, they were often belligerent in their attitude, but when fines for overdue books had been removed, their attitude usually underwent a change and they mostly apologized for late return of books (Perske, 1962: 147).

Not only fines, but payment for reservations may dampen readers' enthusiasm. Borrowers, whether children or adults, often arrive at the library merely to find to their disappointment that the book of their choice is not available. Moreover, instead of trying to be of service, the library will, unlike a vendor in the market place, generally demand that borrowers put their hands in their pockets before being prepared to make any attempt to procure and reserve the desired books (Parish, 1978: 25).

Writers are in general agreement that levying of fines and payment for reservations do not appear to serve a positive purpose, but rather adds to the disinclination of the average person to return to the library except under duress.

2.3.2.3 <u>The public librarian</u>: (cf. also 3.3.3.2) The librarian, whether qualified or unqualified, sets the tone

of the library. On the whole librarians are dedicated people, often much misunderstood. Renee Lemaitre writes ruefully that

> "In literature the library has traditionally been a temple or a cemetery, and the librarian a recluse, invariably old, bespectacled, living among dust, ladders and documents. The male is bald, the female unattractive and wearing a bun. Their interest in books is cataloguing, not reading. They may be timid, or aggressive and cantankerous, but they are always precise, methodical, conscientious. Recent American films do feature some young and beautiful librarians. In science fiction, the librarian, with his computer, becomes the custodian of the knowledge, hence potentially all-powerful. The picture of the librarian as a normal balanced individual is still a pipe-dream" (Lemaitre, 1978: 19-21).

However, it appears from the literature that librarians may at times have legitimate shortcomings other than those conjured up in the imaginative minds of a hyper-critical or merely facetious public. These shortcomings may be of a personal nature such as his attitude and knowledge or they may be caused by a shortage of staff.

Borrowers sometimes consider the attitude of the librarian to be rather autocratic. This may be because when a book is allowed to be sold in the bookshops and is wanted by users, many librarians take it upon themselves to decide whether or not the book should be read. Parish (1978: 26) suggests that when librarians act in this manner it tends to drive readers away. On the other hand, many librarians are reluctant to attempt to influence borrowers at all. It is precisely this attitude which prompted Roe to write that when a librarian adopts an attitude of non-interference he, not unlike the

over-permissive parent, has abdicated from his responsibilities (Roe, 1965: 34). This conflict of opinion indicates that there is perhaps a need for a middle path.

The view expressed by Clements and Burrell is that librarians need to know more; and that they should have the ability to evaluate the level of reading material and to use such evaluation. They consider that librarians cannot afford to appear ignorant of their resources. Moreover, they regard it as essential that librarians should display sensitivity, enthusiasm and empathy towards the public, for without these qualities it is difficult to purvey library material. In this regard Clements and Burrell maintain that the keyword is appeal, but that the use of advertising and the creation of an empathetic atmosphere are not sufficient in themselves and that there should also be book appeal, for they claim that it is the book which, in the final analysis, is the deciding factor as to whether or not children become avid readers. They propose that if librarians are to make an effective appeal to the modern generation they should be modern in their approach.

However, the 2 authors conclude that even these factors do not suffice. In their view it is desirable for librarians to know the background of the science and reading, so that they will be able to assist children, not only in the selection of books, but also in understanding and giving assistance to the children who experienced difficulties in the acquisition of reading skills (An interview ..., 1973: 687-9).

A shortage of staff may also cause difficulties, because it usually results in the children's librarian not having sufficient time to attend to the children's needs. Ideally, of course, a librarian should always be available to answer questions and to guide the reader in his quest for books. To do this successfully is very difficult if the librarian has not been given sufficient time to read and digest the available material in order to fulfil his task adequately (Roe, 1965: 12).

By and large it would appear that if the librarian is to act as the pivot of his library, but is found lacking in this regard for whatever reason, his presence will affect reader enthusiasm negatively.

2.3.3 SOCIETY AT LARGE

Children are influenced by such factors as their home environment and their surrounding community, but they are also unavoidably affected by the events and attitudes of a much wider world

2.3.3.1 **Attitudes**: Most people, and especially children, are influenced by the attitudes of the society in which they live. Many of these attitudes have their roots in the past, thus appearing to necessitate a survey of the literature dealing with both present and past.

2.3.3.1.1 **Historical attitudes to reading**: Nothing happens in a vacuum, and a look at the historical background of reading should help us understand modern-day reluctance. Reading is not merely a twentieth-century phenomenon. It is a product of all the preceding centuries as well. Attitudes build up in layers as do civilizations and if the root of these attitudes is to be arrived at it is necessary to dig into history.

Books and reading are not new to the world and an attempt will be made to trace the various attitudes towards them dating back as far as 2000 B.C. In the past books were regarded as repositories for facts which were too numerous or too involved for the mind to remember and therefore the texts which survived are largely of an informative and factual nature (Desomogyi, 1974: 487).

Where reading and writing were held in esteem, such as in ancient Egypt, lighter literature which embraced prototype fiction, did exist and the fragments of these, dating back to 2000 B.C. are part of the world's oldest literature. In these we can perceive an awareness of the power of the written word, because many of the stories were written with the express purpose of securing justice. It may be mentioned in passing that social consciousness of this kind included the earliest mention of a Messiah (Breasted, 1916: 96; Desomogyi, 1974: 487).

By about 700 B.C. pre-Socratic Greeks, foremost being Homer, began to commit to writing their oral tradition, being a

record of their battles and of the world of their gods. Although few could read, and yet fewer owned copies of Homer's writings, an awareness of the lot of man gradually developed and the Greeks too began to understand the power of the written word. Songs of heroes began to be replaced in literature by the earliest European call for social justice. By 500 B.C. the ability to write was encouraged and admired in a young man, but it was not considered suitable for a woman. It was, however, not until the age of Pericles, during the fourth century B.C. that books became an important part of Athenian life. Private libraries were established and books were studied, especially the books of instruction which began to appear (Breasted, 1916: 437).

The Romans, influenced by the Greeks, began to establish private libraries and a great gap became apparent between the educated and the uneducated. The attitude of the educated towards literary studies was a very positive one (Breasted, 1916: 693).

The Romans spread the art of reading in Britain but by the Middle Ages people were generally illiterate and proud of it. At a later period of history - although it was acknowledged that literacy was not intended exclusively for clerics, scribes and ruling classes, light reading, of which little was available, was considered to be rather decadent. By the 1800s it was considered a waste of time for a young man to spend time on reading other than that which was useful, but in the case of women reading as such was actually

thought to be a vice (Desomogyi, 1974: 487).

In the Jane Austen (1775-1817) novels, which are considered to be an excellent social commentary of the period, her female characters read fiction, but try to hide knowledge of this activity from the opposite sex because they fear ridicule. Desomogyi (1974: 487) maintains that as recently as 1950 the bookworm was a favourite subject of cartoonists.

The reason for the non-encouragement of reading may not only be because of an ignorance of its value, but also because of the fear that reading may lead to a breakdown in socio-cultural patterns.

An example of this was observed in many of the black Rhodesian communities among whom Joyce Russell's research was confined. They felt their security was being threatened and that, although literacy might bring economic advancement, it seemed hardly worth the social dislocation it would leave in its wake. These people feared that those who acquired literacy would no longer fully participate in their culture. This was because such participation required an unconscious adaption and omission necessary for the transmission of their history and traditions. Such conditions, it is wise to remember, prevail in an oral society but are usually lacking in a literate society (Russell, 1973: 33).

Sometimes attitudes are not governed by society, but are of a purely personal nature. Many people, over the years, have been afraid to delve too deeply into books, because they are aware that the unlimited choice from past and present know-

ledge which is available to the literate person may be dangerous. There are writers and philosophers who have tried to come to grips with this choice and their alienation has been expressed in literature. Examples of this are Don Quixote, who lost his senses as a result of reading too many books, and Gulliver, who was happy in a society without letters and left it reluctantly.

It may therefore be concluded with some confidence that when the community's attitude to reading and writing is positive literature is bound to flourish and books become more readily available. If a people is aware of the power of the written word, it is reasonable to presume that encouragement will be given to those who wish to read, thus reducing the social pressures which may cause children to become reluctant readers. On the other hand, when society's attitude is that reading is not a worthwhile occupation the incidence of reluctant reading is most likely to increase.

For those of the African continent, where by and large this build up of prejudice for or against reading has had little opportunity of being established, it is of importance that the attitude which they absorb should, if possible, have no historically negative bias. It is of no value to fob off twentieth-century Africa with nineteenth-century institutions. In the past, they were often supplied with cast off books and it will be of no service to African readers if this is compounded with the offering of outworn systems (Russell, 1973: 41).

Unless there can be a breaking down of fears and prejudices it would seem that a losing battle is being fought in the Western world because our modern attitudes have their roots in our past.

2.3.3.1.2 **Modern attitudes to reading**: Our historical background does not, in the main, favour a positive bias towards reading. Several issues face the emergent potential reader and these all play their part in balancing the scales between the child becoming or not becoming a reluctant reader. The lack of prestige popularly associated with reading as opposed to more physically active occupations in the English-speaking countries has been dealt with in earlier sections (cf. also 2.2.2.3). There are few who have the courage not to conform with that which is acceptable in their environment and to indulge in the more contemplative activity of reading.

Leisure reading as opposed to enjoyment derived from the mass media, spectator sports and hobbies is the choice which faces each person in a world where relaxation is usually associated with the latter. Even when the choice favours reading, Pilgrim and McAllister observed that reading for pleasure is usually from popular periodicals, because they are up to date, journalistic in style and relatively short (Pilgrim & McAllister, 1968: 2).

Not only is the historical background negatively orientated towards reading, but according to Dupee, there has actually

been a decline in book reading in the USA since World War II. He reported in 1956 that only 17% of all adults in the United States would be reading a book on any given day, as opposed to 29% who would have been doing so in 1937 (Dupee, 1956: 6). Thus more and more children are growing up in a non-reading-orientated society. An article in Time states in 1981 that the parents of more than one-fifth of New York's '7th-graders' i.e. in their ninth year at school - have been informed that their children would have to be held back a year because of reading deficiencies. It would not be idle speculation to wonder if there is a connection between this and the decline in reading during the previous decades in the USA (What these soaring scores mean: ..., 1981: 56).

The public library (often the only available source of books) was seen by Blishen as being identified in the minds of a large percentage of lower-class people in Britain at the time of writing (i.e. the mid-1950s) as an institution established and maintained by a governing body, thus making it a source of which they did not wish to avail themselves having a predisposition against anything which they felt represented authority. If this conjecture is true, such parents would not encourage their children to make use of the facilities available at the public library. Unfortunately no literature could be found to confirm or refute Blishen's opinion (Blishen, 1957: 14).

From the above it would seem that the modern attitude to reading has reinforced all the negative aspects of the his-

torical background and that if a child wishes to become a reader he will be considered, at best, an oddity. However, the following chapters will reveal that much is being done to make him feel that reading is not only a perfectly acceptable activity but that it is one which is necessary if he is to succeed emotionally and physically in the highly complex society in which he lives.

2.3.3.2 **Mass media**: (cf. also 3.3.4.1) Much of the blame for the great number of people, both adults and children, being reluctant readers has been said to be caused by the mass media. It is maintained by Pilgrim and McAllister, writing in the late sixties, that very few discover the joy of reading without guidance, because the skills required to enjoy the other popular media such as television, films and tape recorders are much dless less than the skills required in order to enjoy reading. Moreover, they consider that even if children have the required reading skills, the demands of these media on their imaginative powers and ability to interpret are not as great (Pilgrim & McAllister, 1968: 1-2).

This is not a complete picture of the argument and the other side to the coin will be examined in section 3.3.4.1.

2.3.3.2.1 **Television**: Of all the mass media television has probably had the greatest impact on the life-style of the average man, a life-style which had, for a significant

number, included leisure reading. It is because of this that much research has been undertaken in order to ascertain what the affect has actually been.

It is suggested, by Suzanne Coil, that television in the USA has tended to make large inroads into the oral tradition. Before the advent of the mass media many more parents read to their children and there tended to be more opportunity for conversation. She estimated that the average American pre-school child was watching television for 56 hours per week at the time of her survey in the late 1960s, this leaving a limited proportion of their waking hours to other pursuits, not to mention reading as such (Coil, 1968: 36).

The findings of 11 studies conducted between 1958 and 1960 on the television-watching behaviour of children in Canada, the United States and Britain corroborate Coil's findings. According to Cleary, who co-ordinated these findings, it was found that leisure-time activities such as reading and playing needed to be reorganized because the time spent watching television restricted the time which remained for other leisure activities. On average, children between the ages of 6 and 13 spent an equal amount of time watching television as they did in school. Television watching was ranked by the majority as their favourite leisure time activity. She concluded moreover that these children tended to view the entertainment to the exclusion of programs such as news (Cleary, 1972: 35).

A research project was undertaken by Himmelweit, Oppenheim

and Vince in Britain during 1954-8 on the effects of television on the young and they concluded that, although reading tended to decrease at the time when television was first acquired (the greatest drop being among older children), 10- to 11-year olds soon reverted to reading as before. These researchers also found that the drop was particularly marked among boys, and, in general, children of average intelligence who had been reading very little in any event. However, they also concluded that the type of reading among children often changed, viewers tending to spend more time than before reading comics and magazines and less on books. Even when books were read by child viewers the research team discovered that these books tended to be on a relatively immature level (Himmelweit, Oppenheim & Vince, 1958: 324-9).

Research in Britain by J.P. Carsley in 1955 revealed that children of 10 to 11 years spent more time watching television than reading but it was not possible to ascertain if their reading time had reduced in relation to that which it had been pre-television (Carsley, 1957: 23).

In support of these findings, Cleary expresses the view that children tended to become passive watchers, their desire to become investigators and initiators often being stifled. She considers this tobe the most damaging effect of television (Cleary, 1972: 41-2).

Speaking at a conference in Britain some 16 years earlier, Ursula Eason lamented such thinking, in the following terms:

> "I cannot quite understand why fears are so frequently expressed about the dangers of children becoming a race of passive viewers. Can they not just as easily become passive little readers?" (Eason, 1956: 15).

Eason's views, however, are in full agreement with the findings of Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince, in that she also considers that the amount of reading done by children was almost unaffected by television. Mark Abrams agreed with this assertion. He found, while doing research in Britain, that although middle-class children tended to prefer reading to watching television, this was not true of lower-class children. He qualified this finding by observing that the same tendency was to be found in families without television sets. On the basis of his findings that the child with the television set had almost abandoned radio listening, he concluded that the hours spent listening to a radio were exchanged for television watching when a set was acquired. Therefore television had not affected reading but radio listening (Abrams, 1956: 40-1).

The literature makes it clear that there are both pros and cons to the advent of television and this will be discussed in greater detail in 3.3.4.1.1.

2.3.3.3. **Books**: Negative experiences with books may be as great a cause of reluctant reading as is the lack of opportunity of becoming familiar with books. These may include the results of applying adult criteria to book selection and the emphasis on the 'classics', and the book's format,

pertinence of plot and content.

2.3.3.3.1 **Application of adult criteria to book selection**: This is probably the most contentious topic in the literature dealing with children's books and reading. Essentially, the writers divide themselves into 2 opposing camps.

First, there are those who believe that as long as the child acquires the habit of reading, no matter if it be through comics, newspapers or books of dubious literary value, such a child can be steered towards improving this standard of reading after the habit has been firmly established. Among this group there is some fear that if the child is forced to read books which have little or no appeal to him or which he finds too difficult for his reading and comprehension skills there will be little possibility of such a child becoming a reader, the joy of reading having never been experienced. Moreover, no opportunity will have been given to acquire a self-determined literary taste which, they maintain, can only develop through the comparison of the good and the bad. This evaluation is believed to be a process which in itself adds to the pleasure of reading.

The other group contends that certain books should be read at certain stages of the child's reading life and that if the great books available for that stage and age are missed, it is doubtful whether these books will be returned to at a later date a and thus an important stage of development may have been omitted. Moreover, as understandably only a

limited number of books can be read during the normal lifespan of childhood, they argue that the squandering of the child's reading period will necessarily result in his deprivation of much if not all quality literature. Such children will probably become permanent readers of second rate reading material, their appreciation of better things having never been developed, both because they have learned to accept inferior literature and because they have perhaps never been made aware of anything better.

Despite the amount which has been written by the protagonists of both points of view the question does not appear to have become any nearer to being satisfactorily resolved. All that seems to occur is that each group takes it in turn to dominate the scene and, as the pendulum swings, books of questionable value such as those written by Enid Blyton and F.W. Dixon, are alternately removed or replaced upon the shelves of school and public libraries.

Irrespective of whether the attitude of adults towards book selection is permissive or otherwise, the fact that children are aware of adult interference may negatively affect their attitude towards reading. Sometimes there is a reluctance among children to read because they are unwilling to have their choice of books dictated to them by others, viewing adult selection of books with antagonism. Adult selection of books can sometimes do more harm than good. Ideally remarks William Burton, children should select their own books under appropriate guidance. They will probably select what they

feel to be important and what they will understand. Although these will not necessarily be books which the parent or librarian would like children to value they are more likely to be read with profit and pleasure. This problem therefore can usually be overcome by tactful guidance, suggestions rather than commands (Burton, 1956: 361; Cashdan, 1969: 8). There is a more serious problem underlying the criteria for book selection, viz. the need to decide which books will be made available to the child, or in other words, which books the child will be allowed to read. As stated earlier on, no other aspect of children's librarianship excites as much argument and reflects such divergence of opinion as this issue.

According to Anderson (1940: 263) supporters of both the viewpoints outlined at the beginning of this section emphasize the child's needs. The one deals with ultimate needs, the other with immediate ones. The former feels that unless certain books are read the child will remain uneducated. The latter maintains that the satisfaction of the child's interests is of the utmost importance.

Dorothy White writes that:

> "A steady diet of second-rate reading can be as deleterious to the mind as poor food is to the body. There is more than one form of malnutrition" (White, 1958: 11).

She maintains that children read comparatively few books, but tend to be influenced by them. They receive there books, by and large, through intermediates such as teachers and

parents. These adults are therefore in a position to supervise their reading.

Of the same opinion is Pienaar who claims that the child lacks the ability to discriminate. She maintains that the only reasons why a child will refuse to read something of value are 1 or more of the following: (a) that a book is unsuited to his personality, (b) that it has not been recommended with enthusiasm, or (c) that the child's taste has already been spoilt by inferior literature. She feels that, although the child may read inferior books there is no need for them, in the event, to be given such books by those in authority. In her view children should be exposed to good literature from the beginning as they are to good manners, so that popularity alone should not be the norm of the child's reading (Pienaar, 1968: 23-30).

Both Pienaar and Huck believe that time spent on inferior books is wasted because according to them, children do not come back to the good books which should have been read at that particular period of their lives. Childhood is thus too short to encourage the reading of any but good books (Huck, 1964: 112; Pienaar, 1968: 14-8).

In refuting this argument Blishen writes that

> "...harm comes to children from books only if they don't read enough of them, or read too narrow a range, or are driven into some underground world of books, if they aren't living within the lively and varied literary environment that ...the school library ought to ensure for them. If children are to become real readers, we must be prepared for risks" (Blishen, 1968: 33).

Books which would appear to be the ones to be recommended, other than the 'classics', would seem to Chambers to be those which have won awards. The 'classics' are those books which by tradition have become accepted as great children's literature and have withstood the test of time (e.g. Treasure Island, The Water babies and Robinson Crusoe). Chambers considers that, although many of the award-winning books may have all the qualities required they often fail in the most important one, viz. child appeal. A book which has child-appeal could be defined as a book with a format and plot which will attract and hold the attention of a child. These criteria may not necessarily be exactly the same as those which adults apply to a book. This, Chambers suggests, might result from the fact that those who make the awards only come into contact with the children who frequent libraries and may be unaware because of lack of contact, of what the library user, who is also possibly a reluctant reader, looks for in a book which he would be prepared to read. He concludes that unless awards are given with the criterion of child appeal in mind, children will soon come to associate the quality book with the boring book and will be reluctant to read them or ultimately any book recommended by adults (Chambers, 1969: 65-72).

Of like opinion Roe remarks that bombarding children with good books because of over-eagerness and concern for their intellectual welfare, is not likely to improve their attitude to reading. Moreover, children will tend to regard

those who recommend such books as being 'stuffy' and 'out of touch' (Alm, 1962: 103; Roe, 1965: 88-9).

Even when a child does come to the library the exclusion of all but the best books may cause him to leave, never to return and so the opportunity to introduce such a child to books of quality gradually is lost. If the child asks for a series of books which the librarian has decided is not worth purchasing and discovers that there are no such books available, books suggested by the librarian may not satisfy his needs and the child may well feel that his taste and values have been rejected. Contact will probably be lost alongside the child's loss of self-esteem (Roczniok, 1976: 27).

It is conceded that too much of anything is never good, but the suggestion is made that if series books will attract the reluctant reader, there seems to be no good reason for not using them. Wentworth considers that one can try to direct the child towards a wider range of books at a later stage of his career. He refutes the claim that this is not, as is often thought, the lazy way out, but considers this more difficult than a take it or leave it attitude. Wentworth maintains that the vocabulary and idiom in the series books is often better than that of the average family, that these books are not immoral and that they circulate irrespective of any adult attempt to ban them. He points out that private circulation offers far more opportunity for immoral books (Wentworth, 1941: 291-2) (cf. also 4.3.4.1). Saville, Ransome and Estes are all series writers. To condemn their

books outright purely for this reason would seem to be rather shortsighted.

The problem which may arise from the promotion of the good book is that it is usually procured by adults and is therefore rejected by children who then may decide to read comics or nothing at all (Townsend, 1967: 161). However, Dickinson does not consider that comics are necessarily bad. In fact, he thinks that the banning of the reading of such material as comics poses a threat to a child's security because it removes from the child a sense of belonging to a group culture. In his opinion children must discover things for themselves, possibly through their varying needs for security. Although all children do not have the same needs, he has observed that they all have needs of some kind and therefore probably appreciate cultural variety which may also act as a form of literary roughage. He concludes that even the reading of inferior material can eventually assist in developing the habit of reading (Dickinson, 1973: 102-3). A middle path is taken, in a letter written by Boniwell who asserts that librarians may hope children will read certain titles and encourage them to do so, but this does not give them the right to either force children to read these titles or to ban other titles. Her reason is that such choices tend to be purely subjective. Boniwell considers that librarians must offer children books which they consider to be of a high calibre, not because they believe that children should read such books exclusively but because they feel that if

they do not read these books they will have been denied a rewarding experience (Boniwell, 1960: 211).

In replying to this letter, Hall, rejects Boniwell's position. His reason for this is that unless librarians make such value judgements their knowledge of children's literature has been wasted (Hall, 1961: 33). This opinion is echoed in another letter in which Marjorie Roe questions the value of ceaseless reading unless the knowledge gained is used to select or reject books. This would not include banning them (Roe, 1961: 34).

It is observed by Moss that, providing a book's emotional content is sound and of significance to the child, (i.e. regardless of the quality of its writing and illustrations), it will be more important in the child's development than all the books of inclusive quality available (Moss, 1970: 142). In the same vein Wentworth asks the question as to which as preferable - to reach maturity reading detective books or to reach it having never read (Wentworth, 1941: 292).

Often a book may have significance for a child because it fulfils a need at a particular phase of a child's life. Chambers considers reading to be a matter of moods and children do not always wish to be challenged by books but often want something familiar and pertinent. Many children wish to explore books according to their moods and it is through contact with both good and bad that discrimination develops. Without this we may have reluctant, limited and

dissatisfied readers (Chambers, 1977(b): 706-7). Moreover, Blishen asserts that it is this very act of judging the quality of books which adds to the child's reading enjoyment (Blishen, 1974: 217). Weiss warns that once out of school the teacher and his reading list will usually be forgotten and unless free exploration of books, newspapers and magazines has been allowed and a discriminating taste for permanent reading developed the child will probably join the ranks of the non-readers (Weiss, 1961: 7).

In defence of the use of inferior reading materials in the combatting of possible reader reluctance Mitchison suggests that it may

> "act as a kind of mental roughage and serve to help in digestion of what is worthwhile" (Mitchison, 1951: 38).

She considers that one must first remove the child's fear of books before suitable literature can be foisted on the child (cf. also 2.1.6).

It may well be that the debate about the importance of the quality of the books read by children has been somewhat magnified. Writing about the lack of quality of a person's reading material, Virginia Woolf states that inferior reading matter eventually palls because the reader finds that he must expend too much effort in endeavouring to complete the half-truths found therein (Woolf, 1932: 264).

It is feared that the result of forcing children to read only the best books instead of hoping that they will tire of inferior literature and turn naturally towards literature of

quality, may be that

> "...In the end Jonny cannot read because Jonny is not allowed to read and not allowed to become a reader" (Chambers, 1977(b): 708).

Chambers concludes that it is important to teach children how to read and not to worry only about how much and what the child reads. He feels that the important factor is the enjoyment of reading. Without this a reluctance to read will probably develop (Chambers, 1977(b): 708).

Of interest when weighing up the arguments advanced by those advocating the 2 attitudes towards children's book selection and recommendation is an article written by C.H. Vermeulen, City Librarian of the Cape Town Library Service. His library service went through a period when only children's books of high literary and aesthetic quality were purchased irrespective of user needs, and despite the wide range of communities served by the library. This was accompanied by an intensive reader guidance program. He concludes that the system had some success, but that it did not induce children to read a substantial number of titles which remained unused on the library shelves.

This policy has been superseded by one which still provides books of quality, selected with the needs of the gifted reader in mind, thus limiting the number of such books provided. The reluctant reader is now catered for by a wider selection of medium quality books. Moreover, the needs of those engaged in school projects has led to the purchasing of a greater variety of non-fiction selected in consultation

with the education authorities.

A substantial increase in children's membership has occurred, but without a community survey this cannot be attributed to the new policy with any fair degree of confidence. What he claims to be able to confirm is that the community needs apparently are being met, because there is no longer an accumulation of books at the libraries (Vermeulen, 1981: 13).

Ideally all children would evince enthusiasm for books of superior quality. It has not been proved, neither has it been claimed that any one method of applying adult criteria to book selection has proved completely successful in the eradication of reluctant readers. It would thus be reasonable to conclude that a compromise should be sought. Those who wish children to read only books of quality will perhaps stock a small selection of books of inferior quality in order to ease the way to becoming an enthusiastic reader. On the other hand, those with a permissive attitude towards reading material will perhaps consider making every effort to hasten the transition from inferior to superior literature indicating whenever possible the advantages of such a transition. For further references see section 3.3.3.3.1.

The importance of the finding of a compromise that will attach children to reading can be understood if it is realized that probably no more than 3% of the books bought in the 1970s for American children to read were chosen by the children themselves, the proportion being larger in Britain.

In the case of the USA, 80% of the books were purchased by schools and libraries, the remainder through the retail trade. Thus children are dependent, by and large, on the standards and tastes of their elders. This includes a parent body who may unfortunately be without any knowledge of children's literature. Unless those who purchase this huge body of books can reach an understanding of the needs of the young, the incidence of reluctant reading is likely to increase (Wintle, 1974: 17-8).

2.3.3.3.2 **Emphasis on the 'classics'**: The term 'classics' denotes

> "A writer, or work, of the first rank and of acknowledged excellence: especially (as originally used) in Greek or Latin literature " (The Shorter Oxford English dictionary, 1955: 320).

However, in the case of children's literature it would not usually include Greek or Latin works but would indicate that these books were written some time ago and have attained general acceptance, if not by children, at least by most educationalists. They are therefore considered by many adults to be necessary milestones in a child's literary experience.

Those who belong to the group referred to in the last section (i.e. those who believe that the child's reading diet should include, if possible, only books of quality), will of necessity emphasize the reading of the 'classics'. Many teachers and librarians do not encourage the reading of

the 'classics' out of any such personal convictions but because they consider these books to be 'safe' viz. books to which no parent will object and which contain nothing considered to be contentious. This type of recommendation may stem from a lack of knowledge of children's literature or to an indifferent attitude as to whether or not the child develops a love of reading.

There are others who feel (cf. the previous section), that such books have no reality to the modern child in either language or thought process. The child's taste for fine literature may be sullied by his dipping into books before he has matured sufficiently to understand and appreciate them since reading, being more than skill, is essentially concerned with such matters as cultural and language development. Moreover, this group considers that a belief in the paramount importance of literature of quality would result in more notice being taken of books written by modern authors, many of whom write with the same skill as those of the past, but present their material in a form more acceptable to the twentieth century child.

There is a feeling that even when awards are given to modern writers the criteria in terms of which they are judged, tend to be somewhat out-dated and these books too seem to hold little reality for the modern child. It is felt that if the child can acquire a taste for literature of quality through the modern writers it should be possible to introduce such a child to the 'classics' gradually, and to develop an

appreciation of good literature both of today and yesterday (Chambers, 1969: 66-71).

It is only recently that setworks prescribed in South African schools have not been entirely or almost entirely selected from this type of book. However, there does appear to have been a shift in emphasis, and such books as Catcher in the rye, My family and other animals and Watership down have now joined the ranks of acceptable books. The 'classics' are often meaningless to the modern child, or the events are unrealistic and may create an 'in-school artificiality and out-of-school reality' conflict (Burton, 1956: 364).

Care should be taken when recommending the reading of the 'classics' to children for their leisure reading indicating that such books are necessary for their mental growth, because in such circumstances children tend to feel as if their mental processes are being manipulated against their will (Mitchison, 1951: 40).

Chambers (1969: 72) considers that adults who disregard the child's need at the time, advising them to read specific books on the assumption that they are intrinsically good, may make the child feel as if he is being forced to partake of a treat, thus causing him to construct a wall of resentment. Both Chambers and Mitchison are referring to voluntary rather than compulsory reading.

The term 'classic' has unfortunately assumed a negative connotation in the eyes of most children. To remedy this,

reprints should be of good quality, should not be promoted as 'classics', they should not differ from other books and the discovery of their worth should be left to children (Blishen, 1966).

It would seem that there is a general agreement that children should read the 'classics' but that caution should be exercised as to how they are introduced. Moreover, there should not be a blind acceptance of the old at the expense of that which is new.

2.3.3.3.3 **The physical format of books and their contents**: (cf. also 3.3.3.3.4) The format, pertinence of plot and book content are, by and large, dictated by the views of those who influence the selection of books for publication. Books are "written by adults, they are read by adults for adult publishers, they are reviewed by adults, they are bought by adults" (Townsend, 1967: 161). Children's pocket money may relate to sweets or comics but cannot, normally, enable them to purchase quality books. A book's success will also depend on whether libraries decide to stock it. Thus the financial success of a book will be established long before a single child has seen it. This can have a bad affect on authors who may be forced to alter their style of writing to one which will be acceptable to the adult world. Writers such as Phillipa Pearce and Arthur Ransome contend however that no writer of worth can write for anyone except himself.

Although the didactic approach of the nineteenth century has

supposedly broken down, writers concerned with the assessment and selection of children's books, such as May Hill Arbuthnot, Charlotte S. Huck, Doris Young and Bernice Cooper, indicate that books should promote an understanding of self and the world around so that they may help to create an ideal society. If publishers concentrate solely on this type of book it may well result in a sizeable amount of shelf sitters and an increasing incidence of reluctant readers (Townsend, 1967: 159-62) (cf. also 2.1.7).

The physical aspects of a book, viz. the lavishness of production, the general state of repair, its thickness, the type of paper used and the inclusion of illustrations all influence the child's decision as to whether to reject or be attracted to a book.

It is commonly thought that lavishly produced books will attract the young but such books often have a negative affect on people unused to handling them. Such inexperienced people tend to touch the books nervously. A feeling that books are something rarefied (i.e. remote from reality) may be further reinforced. The point is made that such books often become coffee-table objects (Hill, 1974: 44).

Both Baur and James found through observation that children prefer clean and attractive books and that it was only works by the very popular authors, such as Blyton, which were borrowed when old and tattered. Thus the format and condition of a book remains the important issue, even if content is always the overriding factor (Baur, 1967: 3120; James,

1978: 119).

The influence of book format on children has not only been assessed by observation but people such as G.A. Carter and J.D. Carsley have undertaken research projects in order to attempt a more accurate assessment.

In a research project Carter (1947: 217-8) asked 109 English children 12 questions, in an attempt to ascertain whether these children had any preferences in regard to the format of the books they read. The population examined comprised of 78 boys from an industrial area and 31 girls from a residential area (all attending either one or other of 2 Warrington schools), of between the ages of 12 and 14.

It was discovered that 65% of the sample preferred 'fat' books, while 22% expressed a preference for 'thin' ones, the remaining 13% being indifferent. Those who preferred 'fat' books explained that their choice was dictated by the consideration of changing their books less often, and of needing to remember fewer characters. Those who preferred 'thin' books claimed that they were primarily curious and wanted to reach the end of a book. There was a general preference for rough rather than smooth paper because they found it difficult to read if the paper shone. Most preferred illustrations, especially those in colour.

This finding is directly at variance with that of Carsley (1957: 21) who found that British children of between the ages of 10 and 11 preferred books with no illustrations. Carter (1947: 218) also found that most children preferred a

certain type of book, but could give no reason for this, perhaps because their choice was often based on more than 1 consideration. He concluded that children know what they prefer and therefore the format of books plays its part in influencing the child into becoming either a reader or a non-reader.

It seems evident from the survey that book format may affect the incidence of reluctant reading and that only in the minority of cases does content become the overriding factor. Even if children like the format of a book, the plot must hold their interest if they are to persevere with reading.

According to Larrick adolescents are relatively mature in experience and actually find very little in the books which they are forced to read which have any connection with the world in which they live. She questions whether a society whose toys are violent (e.g. guns and war games) and one which has replaced conventional dolls with the representational one of Barbi, the mini-teenager doll with a modern wardrobe, will find such books acceptable (Larrick, 1967: 3816).

A reason which may account for the paucity of books dealing with the child's contemporary society and its problems may be the fact that it is generally easier to write of the past than the contemporary world (Chambers, 1969: 70-2).

Both Larrick and Chambers maintain that children mostly seek satisfaction and pleasure outside the world of books and they will be encouraged to read only when they can identify

themselves with the characters in their books (Chambers. 1969: 70-2; Larrick, 1967: 3816).

It is generally agreed among the writers surveyed that the reluctant reader is the rule rather than the exception. Such a child may not be emotionally or physically handicapped, below chronological age in reading ability nor below average in academic achievements, and therefore consider it of importance to examine closely all possible causes among which book content is considered to be of highest significance. Interest and vocabulary will probably affect comprehension which in turn may influence the child's attitude towards reading.

One of these writers, Judith Goldberger, comments that, although there are a great many books for the good reader who can read books of varied content, there are very few in which high interest and low vocabulary are combined, thus resulting in the latter having very few books from which to choose. Another of the writers, Daniel Melcher,laments also the dearth of books for children graduating from listening to books being read aloud to them to reading books for themselves. Here again there appear to be very few books which have a content suitable for a large number of children. A third writer, May Hill Arbuthnot, is of the opinion that it is not only necessary that books are easy to read, it is equally important that the content is worthy of the child's respect and enjoyment because without self-satisfaction it is unlikely that the child will continue his struggle for

literacy (Arbuthnot, 1957: 598; Goldberger, 1978: 382; Melcher, 1973: 3117).

Unless the need for self-satisfaction is fulfilled it may negatively affect comprehension for this is very often influenced by the attitude towards the content of the material. Furthermore, there is normally a correlation between attitude and the acquisition of reading skills (Rowland & Hill, 1965: 68).

The cause of reluctance can often be traced to the first books the child has encountered while learning to read. Reading is taught, in the majority of cases, from books in which both the subject and the vocabulary are controlled. The result is that the essential nature of reading viz. the communication between author and reader, is subjugated to the process of word recognition (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977: 257). Unless such books are of high interest it would appear that children, at the same time as they are learning reading skills, may also be acquiring a reluctance to use these same skills.

It was concluded by Lazar, based on research conducted in New York during the 1930s that the child with a limited vocabulary (attributable to either his home environmental conditions or the lack of facilities for teaching reading skills at school) tended to become bored by books of low-level interest and frustrated by those with large vocabularies (Lazar, 1937: 25). Research and observation both indicate that a more careful selection should be made before

presenting children with the first books they are to read.

An attempt which has been made to fill this need for low-vocabulary, high-interest books were the so called 'reluctant reader' books. These are books specifically designed for the reluctant or slower reader. They have limited vocabularies, larger print than normal and simplified sentences.

The problem is that these books are often of mediocre literary value and are designed only to be used as a bridge across which the reluctant reader may be guided into the land of books. It is the interest and excitement which a book evokes rather than the vocabulary level which will usually encourage a reluctant reader to read further than the first few pages (Lowrie, 1962: 114).

The reason why 'reluctant reader' books do not usually succeed is due to such factors as the use of devices such as shortened sentences, larger print, fewer lines and a reduced vocabulary. Accordingly, although often resulting in immediate appeal because these books are less difficult conceptually than the standard book given to a child of commensurate reading skill, the reluctant reader will as a rule soon lose interest since these devices tend to make books very dull (Chambers, 1969: 42).

When interviewed in 1974, Theodor S. Giesel, the famous Dr. Seuss (founder of Beginning books, being books of limited vocabulary) expressed the view that he had developed a resentment of controlled vocabularies and completely dis-

regarded them. He had found that with simple, clearly thought out sentences the writer could obviate their use and still make his meaning clearly understood (Wintle, 1974: 122).

Dealing with illiteracy and reluctant readers has apparently shed new light on the concept of what is considered to be the right book, for the right child at the right time.

CHAPTER 3

STEPS TAKEN IN AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT

THE CREATION OF RELUCTANT READERS

The line between prevention and cure is not always absolutely clear-cut. Roughly speaking, it may be said that preventative measures are applied to those who have not yet established themselves as either readers or reluctant readers, while curative measures are applied to those who have already decided that they do not enjoy reading and will only read when it is absolutely necessary. In accordance with this definition this chapter, being an exposition of preventative action, includes steps taken in connection with pre-school, kindergarten and lower-primary children (pre-adolescents), whereas curative measures tend to be applied to those of higher-primary and high-school age as well as early school leavers (adolescents). As the divisions are sometimes somewhat blurred, certain innovations and ideas could be applied equally effectively to either group (i.e. to those requiring preventative or curative treatment respectively).

If children are born with an inherent reluctance to read, any attempt to minimize the incidence of reluctant reading by means of either preventative or curative measures would

serve little purpose. However, the literature does not postulate such a theory.

Chambers considers that

> "Readers are made, not born. No one comes into the world already disposed for or against words in print" (Chambers, 1973: 16).

Expressing agreement with this view, Coetzee (1957: 30) observes, in turn, that a knowledge of reading is no more inborn than a knowledge of speaking.

If proponents of this assumption are correct, it would seem appropriate to survey the literature so as to ascertain the causes why children become reluctant readers and what preventive measures have been taken, so that an attempt can be made to eradicate this problem as far as possible.

On the whole there would appear to be no single approach and no simple blueprint that can be applied to prevent the incidence of reluctant reading. It is hoped, however, that one or some of the following preventative measures, which have been gleaned from the relevant literature, will contribute towards enabling the child to acquire a life-time habit of reading.

3.1 THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD

The survey of the literature will be divided, as it was in the previous chapter, into 3 main sections, the first of which will deal with factors concerning the individual child in regard to such matters as the establishment of reading as a habit, peer influence and the pros and cons of

bibliotherapy.

3.1.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF READING AS A HABIT

If a person develops the ability to use and enjoy books in childhood, such ability normally endures into adult life (Crooks, 1953: 57). An acceptance of this statement is perhaps the reason why many of the writers concern themselves with the establishment of reading as a habit.

One who thinks this is not as difficult as it sounds, is Matignoni, who maintains that almost any child can become interested in books if the key to his general interest can be found. She qualifies this statement by pointing out that this does not necessarily mean that the child will automatically become an avid reader. According to her, each child develops at his own speed, but that innate interest normally precedes reading ability. She observes that many children tend to read continuously and then stop reading for a while (Matignoni, 1953: 179-80).

In order to encourage reading as a habit, an understanding of the motivations which cause people to read is necessary. According to Terman and Lima (1931: 17) children read to satisfy 3 urges, viz. curiosity, the desire for wish-fulfilment and the tendency to imitate. Endorsing this theory, McColvin (1950: 286) adds that for the reading habit to be firmly established the child needs to be motivated to put some effort into reading and helped to understand that most things satisfying involve effort. Another writer,

Mulder (1976: xii, 19) suggests that for children to reach such an understanding they need to be taught that reading is not purely for education but also for sheer self-gratification. Mulder, however,is taken to task by Nell, who maintains that he has not developed a reading motivational concept which can be used in the classroom. The importance of this, according to Nell, is that there is the danger that if school requirements for leisure reading are introduced, the enjoyment of reading and the quality of the books read may decrease because the motivation is no longer intrinsic but extrinsic (Nell, 1978(b): 66). Researchers such as Shapira have found that the child who is extrinsically motivated is more inclined to select easier books than if he is intrinsically motivated, i.e. he will select the simplest text possible for schoolwork but if he selects a book for leisure reading will be inclined to select one of moderate difficulty (Shapira, 1976: 1235-42).

Such ideas ,viz. that reading is worthwhile and satisfying have to be inculcated alongside those related to such things as good manners, behaviour and ethics, write Terman and Lima. Neither inheritance nor natural endowment will guarantee that the child acquires any of these habits. While admitting that some children are more receptive than others to such guidance, they consider that all children of average intelligence can be educated to enjoy literature (Terman & Lima, 1931: 3-4).

A child, in realizing that reading is worthwhile should be

made to understand that whether or not he wishes to acquire a lifelong reading habit depends on the type of life he wishes to lead. If he will be satisfied with a life confined within an ever narrowing groove then what he decides is not of great importance. If, however, he wishes to explore the wonders of his world, his decision is crucial (Chute, 1957: 446).

Even if there is an understanding of the motivations necessary for the establishment of reading as a habit, it would seem that although children have no actual inborn dislike of reading, there are many factors which will influence the final outcome as to whether or not they acquire the habit of reading. There appears to be consensus among writers that their efforts are often frustrated (see Chapter 2). Hence a removal of the causes of these frustrations as far as this is possible, and a concomitant development of a permanent interest based on satisfaction would seem to be the most effective means of persuading the child that the effort is worthwhile (Jacobs, 1956: 23).

Environment and education appear to play a large part in the establishment of the reading habit. Berelson writes that the higher the level of a person's education the more developed his reading skills are likely to be and the more he will probably have come to rely on books as a source of information and recreation (Berelson, 1949: 24).

These findings are borne out by Fouché, who researched the reading interests of Afrikaans-speakers in Johannesburg and

the urban black community of Pretoria. He found in his survey that reading habits are part of a person's lifestyle and generally relate to his position in the system's social stratification: the higher the status, the more advanced the socio-cultural participation tended to be (Fouché, 1977: 3, 12-5).

It would seem from the above that in order to fulfill educational requirements a person has of necessity to undertake a large amount of reading. In this manner reading becomes habitual, reading skills improving through practice thus making the experience of reading easier and more enjoyable. It is suggested by Robinson (1956: 3) that a distinction be made between the skill and the habit of reading, and that both need to be cultivated in the process of teaching and learning. She therefore considers it important to establish appropriate reading programs for the disadvantaged in particular, since they are not likely to assume the habit of reading in the absence of such an attempt.

Health, too, may affect the reading habit. Although poor health and an inadequate diet, according to John McCrossan, may detrimentally affect the acquisition of reading skills, Terman and Lima found some evidence that sickly children usually had more time to spend on reading, as a result of their other activities being somewhat restricted. They also found a correlation between the level of intelligence, on the one hand, and the quality of books read and the child's ambition to explore the world of books, on the other. Gifted

children, they suggest, usually have a deeper desire to read at an early age and cognisance of this fact should be taken so that the desire will not be allowed to die because of a lack of stimulation. It is at the moment of greatest enthusiasm that it is easiest to sow the seeds of lifetime reading habits (McCrossan, 1966: 11-2; Terman & Lima,. 1931: 48, 59-60).

Whether or not children acquire the reading habit is often dependent upon the status given to it within the society in which they live (Chambers, 1969: 116). Many families attempting to climb up the social ladder encourage their children to read because they regard reading as a middle- and upper-class value which is necessary to acquire as a prerequisite to attainment of middle-class status (cf. also 2.2.2) (Roe, 1965: 31).

It can therefore be concluded that it is not sufficient to teach children to read regularly and to read books of acknowledged 'literary' quality. Unless children can be taught that reading is a creative activity, worthy of personal effort, because of the great pleasures that it will provide, the habit of reading will not be established (Chambers, 1973: 29-30).

3.1.2 **PEER ATTITUDES** (cf. also 3.3.2.1.2.3.3. and 3.3.2.1.2.3.7)

Children tend to feel more favourably disposed towards the concept of reading if they know that it enjoys acceptability

within their peer group. If their peers recommend books and reading is the norm for the group, it will probably not be regarded as a purely adult value imposed from above (Lowrie, 1962: 114; McClellan, 1977: 46).

Of the same opinion is Roe (1964:3) who cites, as one of the causes of reluctant reading among children, the fact that such reluctance usually manifests itself when the peer group accords reading a very low status.

3.1.3 BIBLIOTHERAPY

The aims of bibliotherapy, as defined by Moses, are to attempt (a) to give the child insights and solutions to his problems through identification with the characters in the books he reads, (b) to inform and to explain to him the complexities of human behaviour, and (c) to afford him the opportunity of liberation from stress (Moses, 1962: 437).

It is claimed by Altmann and Nielsen that research in bibliotherapy has provided proof that the teaching and discussion of books, specifically those chosen for the individual, can help to overcome emotional and behavioural problems (e.g. low self-esteem), which handicap the child when dealing with the very environmental conditions which may have given rise to his sense of inferiority. This statement is qualified by the authors, however, by emphasizing that many feel that the attitude of the therapist is of greater importance than the therapy. It is essential, accordingly, that the bibliotherapist, during regular interviews

used for choosing books and discussing the child's reaction to them, must have empathy and be able to communicate a deep concern for the child's personal worth and potential. Bibliotherapy, they maintain, does not always offer the best solution, because, if there are other factors in the child's life causing lack of self-esteem or other manifestations of emotional disturbance, the salient treatment will tend to be neutralized (Altmann & Nielsen, 1974: 285-7).

3.2 PARENTAL AND HOME INFLUENCES

A sympathetic homelife is the basis upon which all education is founded. If learning is to be an easy and natural process it is dependent not only upon the child's ability but also his attitudes and early training. The child, especially in his pre-kindergarten years, usually socializes within a very small group and is therefore primarily influenced by his family circle. The attitude of this group towards books and reading will unconsciously be absorbed by the child and will become part of his own life-style. It is not only the attitude of the family which is important but also the quality of the conversation surrounding the child. The breadth and imaginative use of vocabulary and the range of subject matter will influence his later ability in learning to read and enjoy books (Chambers, 1973: 16-7; Wheatley, 1953: 138). It seems that home influences do not only affect the child's ease of learning during the pre-kindergarten years, but also tend to set the pattern for later learning.

Both Morris, who worked for the National Foundation for Educational Research in collaboration with the Kent Educational Authority over a period of 11 years, in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the Plowden Commission in 1964, found that parental interest in books helped children at every level of their school career (cited by Williams, 1971: 19-20).

It is not sufficient for the parent merely to provide an appropriate environment of learning. They should demonstrate by example the pleasure they themselves derive from the learning experience and should encourage their children in all their endeavours. Thus they should be guides rather than censors, providing their children with easily accessible and appropriate collections of books (Arbuthnot, 1957: 16; Duff, 1956: 17; McDormand, 1968: 121).

Another fundamental approach a parent may adopt to encourage learning and reading is to be ready to lend a sympathetic ear to hisr child's stories. This will help develop his vocabulary and will make him more amenable to accept parental educational suggestions (Harrington, 1971: 56).

The literature discusses a great variety of activities which can be undertaken by the parent as a means of improving the child's literary skills and enlarging his knowledge of the world around him. This, coupled with a fostering of a love of reading, should help to prevent his joining the ranks of the reluctant readers. These activities can include, among others, early storytelling and reading, the use of books and discussions about them, family outings and the linking of

reading with everyday life. The parents should present themselves as persons who enjoy and approve of reading. It is also within the scope of the parents to provide books for their children and to have knowledge of them.

3.2.1 **EARLY STORYTELLING AND READING** (cf. also 2.2.6)

By general consensus in the literature the importance of parental influence in the child's reading life is very great. Parents reading aloud to their children are often the means by which a child will encounter his first experience of books. It is these first books and their effect on the child which as a rule set the tone for the child's future attitude towards books and reading. Whether or not he develops into a lover of books is usually directly correlated with the amount of pleasure he derives from them. Moreover, even if he forgets their content, they will have had the capacity to stir his imagination more than any book with which he later comes into contact is likely to be able to do (White, 1958: 13).

Not all children are fortunate enough to have stories told to them or to be read to at an early age, but for those who are there is the association of the mother's voice with the same voice which provides his food and comfort, and therefore the child is usually predisposed to listening to her voice and will welcome stories told by her (Burr, 1946: 118).

Supporting this theory, Duff tenders a formula, viz.

"One relaxed baby, bathed, fed and at peace with

> the world; one book of jolly coloured pictures; an accommodating parental lap, complete with owner who enjoys the book and shows it in face, voice and whole self. These to be combined and taken slowly every evening, with no interruptions allowed" (Duff,1956: 33).

McDormand (1968: 120) wrote that she, along with other Canadian librarians, felt that children (more so in the sixties than in previous decades) needed comfort and security of a kind to be found, among other places, in their literary heritage. Therefore, it was considered very important for children to nourish their curiosity with books at an early age.

Although McDormand refers primarily to children who are old enough to be read to, early storytelling can begin even before the child is old enough to be introduced to books, in fact from birth. The mother can accompany her children's day-to-day activities such as dressing or going to bed with nursery rhymes. In support of this opinion is the fact that it has been found that disadvantaged children are helped by this type of play (Bodger, 1969: 403).

Children at the age of 18 months normally have small vocabularies and are generally unable to follow a story. They will, however, usually respond to what they hear and to what they are exposed. Authorities suggest that parents should teach their children the meaning of pictures, just as later these children will have to be taught the meaning of letters either by their parents or by their teachers. Normally they come to realize that the picture tells a story. Later they

will perceive action and will e.g. make a buzzing sound when the see a picture of a car (Simsova, 1962: 168-70).

The 'Mother Goose' type of nursery rhyme constitutes the genre with which to begin storytelling. This is because it has action and a repetition of sound which usually delight babies and contribute unconsciously to their enjoyment of reading. Poetry can be included at this stage, because children normally enjoy the melody of words. That which children learn as tots can be the beginning of a reliable standard of taste and judgment. A child used to the cadence of poetry (as in the works of A.A. Milne) will in all likelihood eventually come to appreciate Milton and Shakespeare (Duff, 1960: 21-3, 26). After 'Mother Goose' and Milne, Beatrice Potter can be introduced and at a later stage folk tales can be brought into play (McDormand, 1968: 121).

It is advisable that parents should continue to read to their children even after they can read for themselves (Harrington, 1971: 56). The reason for this is that the evening reading tends to bring with it the togetherness of sharing a book, and it is this pleasure of sharing which often brings with it a love of books (Duff, 1956: 17; McDormand, 1968: 121). It is especially important because it is at just this time that there is a tendency for comics and television to command ever-increasing attention in the child's life (Fritz, 1957: 1078). There are also many books which interest the child and for which his reading skills are not adequate (McDormand, 1968: 121).

While reading to the child the parent's finger should occasionally run under a line indicating subtly the left-to-right reading movement (Gagliardo, 1971: 6). It is desirable that questions should be asked to make sure that the child understands the story, thus involving him more actively and among other things, helping to enlarge his vocabulary (Harrington, 1971: 56). Children should be encouraged to turn pages and to look at the pictures while the parent reads to foster a sense of participation and for a reinforcement of their primary comprehension (Duff, 1956: 33).

An incentive for parents to establish good reading contact with their children resides in the fact that this will usually assist them in developing an indirect method of guidance - a rather important consideration - because books teach impersonally (Learned, 1964: 61).

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind consider the act of reading to children of such importance that they are running a program whereby braille texts have been inter-spersed with illustrated children's books so that the blind person may read to the child, while the sighted child can follow the story in the book while looking at the pictures (Schuman, 1971: 4148).

3.2.2 THE USE OF BOOKS

Children coming from homes with sparse literary traditions do not, observes Williams, even know how to hold books let

alone how to turn pages. She considers it important for a child to be made aware of the fact that pages can tear before he learns to turn them carefully. For this reason she considers that rag and board books, which are often given to children, do not provide opportunities for the experience of real books. She claims that children who are accustomed to seeing their parents with books in their hands rarely tear books because such children can observe how to handle them. Thus children need to be encouraged, rather than inhibited by a "Do-not-tear, wash- your-hands" attitude. It would therefore seem that the child should become accustomed to the presence of books, regarding them as an everyday part of his existence (Williams, 1971: 31, 33).

Burr is worth quoting at length in this regard:

> "If books occupy space in the family home just as dishes do that serve the family meals, if the baby sees his mother's and father's dependance on books,they soon become accepted as important parts of everyday existence. It is at home that the child sees books used in normal ways. It is here that he sees books read and put aside to greet friends or to go for a walk or a ride. It is at home that he sees books read and interrupted to discuss. He is encouraged to put away his books and go outdoors to play when the sun shines. He is told that he may choose books to take on a visit to his grandmother but is discouraged on taking even a favourite when going to the city to shop. All these are normal ways a family treats books and reading - unconsciously the child is experiencing the situations that link him and reading together" (Burr, 1946: 118).

3.2.3 FAMILY OUTINGS

Some 35 years ago, Burr suggested, that there were not too any things that families tended to do together in modern

urban life. In the light of such social trends it is well to remember that reading and discussion thereof can forge a lasting bond between parent and child (Burr, 1946: 118). Library visits should be a family outing which should be both pleasant and regular (Brady, 1950: 667; Rapport, 1956: 757). Such visits should be unhurried and time should be given for browsing (Harrington, 1971: 56). No librarian can know all the children who frequent the library well enough to recommend a suitable book always. Therefore the parent's presence is a great help in this direction (Fritz, 1957: 1078).

A life-long relationship between reader and library may well be determined by the quality of the first meeting. If the parent inculcates a feeling of shared pleasure rather than obligation, the child's attitude to the event will tend to be positive, thus setting the scene for constructive and fruitful interchange in the future. It is therefore important for the child to begin selecting his own books at an early age albeit under parental guidance (Plotnik, 1972: 821; Williams, 1971: 27).

Two children's family-orientated programs which have been organized by the Louisville Free Public Library in the USA are described by Sheviak. The one comprises a workshop for the mothers of children attending the pre-school story hour. The other program, which the library considers to be of equal importance, is known as "Family Saturday ". The latter originated when the library discovered that many children

who lived far from the library never came there by themselves thus becoming entirely dependent upon their parents for the selection of their reading material. It was therefore decided that the Director of Children's Work would set aside the first Saturday of the month for discussing books with children accompanied by their parents on a day of the week convenient for all. Parents were thus encouraged to make such a library visit a family outing (Sheviak, 1960: 1658-9).

If children are stimulated by active interest and a variety of experiences this will tend to have a positive effect on their reading. Preferably family outings should not be restricted to library visits but extended to include other places of interest so as to broaden the child's horizons (Larrick, 1956: 160-1; McClellan, 1977: 46).

Linking of these experiences with reading is a matter which will be discussed in section 3.2.5.

3.2.4 **BOOK DISCUSSIONS** (cf. also 3.2.9)

Children are naturally curious, and when their curiosity has been stimulated by parental discussions about books and the range and quality of information acquired through them, such children are helped to adopt healthy standards for the appreciation of literature (Terman & Lima, 1931: 6).

It was discovered by Clarke, in a study done in the late 1960s in the USA among 15 year-old boys, that when parents recommended books to their children it was on the whole

difficult for such children to ignore the recommendations or, more importantly, the very existence of books. He also found that parent/child discussions on books tended to give a stamp of approval to books and to increase the child's preparedness to read (Clarke, 1969: *).

Thus discussion brings reading into the public arena and makes it an acceptable family activity.

3.2.5 **LINKING READING WITH EVERYDAY LIFE** (cf. also 3.2)

If the incidence of reluctant reading is to be reduced children need to become accustomed to using books in order to enrich their lives.

Family outings, television viewing and general questions can lead to an easy and natural linking of everyday life to books. Instead of merely answering questions from memory, books can be referred to in order to confirm that the answers are correct, or to ascertain facts unknown. In this manner children will become used to the idea that books, if used correctly, are the providers of useful information. Moreover, a critical attitude can be fostered when the child notices that books do not necessarily always agree on certain facts and, therefore, what is read cannot be taken at face value automatically (Larrick, 1956: 161). If parents openly admit when they do not know the answers and then themselves refer or refer their children to books, the children will come to understand that there is no shame attached to not knowing and, concomitantly, that lack of

knowledge can be rectified through the use of books (Duff, 1956: 155). It is hoped that when a child discovers the answers to questions in books he may become a regular reader (Podendorf, 1947: 85). It is desirable for parents who have a knowledge of children's books not to refer solely to books of facts but also to books of fiction. Another method suggested for aiding the introduction of books to children in an everyday setting is that parents should discuss the characters in books as the embodiment of real people (Larrick, 1956: 162).

3.2.6 **READING ALOUD** (cf. also 2.2.5, 2.2.6 and 3.3.2.2.5)
Ideally children should hear the printed word and respond to it every day. There seems to be a firm correlation between avid readers and a favourable home environment. Any child coming to school without literary experience is at a disadvantage when reading is taught, and this deficiency is not always easy to compensate for at a later stage. A situation like this is not necessarily governed by either class or financial position. If parents read aloud to their children this should enable such children to learn how language can be used, thus firmly establishing a literary background on which a positive attitude to reading can be built (Chambers, 1973: 2; 1977(a): 574).
Research undertaken by the National Children's Bureau in 1958 in Britain (cf. 2.2.8) on 7-year olds has shown that a markedly higher proportion of good readers are from Scotland

than from any other region of Britain and for every 18 poor readers in Scotland there are 29 in England and 30 in Wales. It also revealed that more Scottish parents, both mothers and fathers, read to their children than their counterparts in England and Wales, despite the fact that their children are usually the more fluent readers. An additional bonus is the tentative suggestion that this may be one of the reasons why Scottish children appear to have less trouble than English children in adjusting to the school situation (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 108, 110, 153).

It is important for the parent when reading aloud to children to display his enjoyment of the story and the experience, so that the child can share the pleasure (Gagliardo, 1971: 5).

Parents have an advantage over teachers and librarians in this respect, in that when they read aloud it is to smaller, more intimate groups. One example of parents' position of strategic advantage is their ready opportunities of reading aloud to their children. Among others, accompanying them on holidays provides excellent opportunities for such educational projects. Parents are cautioned not to try to read aloud anything unless they consider it educationally or aesthetically worthwhile, and preferably something the child is not likely to read for himself (Larrick, 1956: 162). Two other points made in the context of encouraging reading among children are that care should be taken to avoid interruption during reading time, while opportu-

nities for extra reading can be created as a means of rewarding the child for effort in the classroom (Learned, 1964: 66).

Sometimes it is the child himself who wishes to read aloud. In such cases parents are reminded of the need to make the child feel that they enjoy listening to his reading. This can be done by showing an interest in what is happening in the unfolding of the plot, no matter how simple the story, and by praising real effort. It is important for parents to ensure that the child chooses stories containing words simple enough for him to read aloud and that help is given to enable him to read with expression and not monotonously, thus enabling him to obtain a greater appreciation and comprehension of the material being read. A further suggestion from which benefits can be derived is that reading-aloud sessions be shared between parent and child, alternating the reading from page to page, as a joint effort tends to enhance the child's mode of expression in reading, giving him added confidence. By way of further incentive the parent can make it a privilege for a younger sibling to listen to him read (Harrington, 1971: 56).

Thus it can be seen that several of the writers are concerned about the child being read aloud to by his parents, suggesting various methods which may help to make the experience both enjoyable and educationally valuable.

3.2.7 BOOK DONATIONS

Another method by means of which parents can encourage their children to become readers, is by investigating the school situation in order to ascertain whether there are any books which would be a worthwhile addition to the library's book-stock. The parent can then donate books of this nature, which in turn, will tend to give the child a sense of personal involvement in the reading material in the school library, thus encouraging him to take an interest in the rest of the material available (Cashdan, 1969: 9).

A suitable time for such a donation is the child's birthday, or it is suggested by way of example, that the school can support the parents in their effort to reduce the possible incidence of reluctant reading. The book can be inscribed with the child's name and the school can announce the gift and publicly congratulate the child on the occasion of his birthday (Huus, 1964: 144).

3.2.8 IMITATION (cf. also 2.2.1)

There is general agreement among the authorities in the field that children learn by imitation. It is considered necessary for parents to examine their homes and themselves in order to evaluate the number and range of books available to them, relating this to the frequency and quality of their private reading and of their reading to others, so that they may provide something worthy of their children's imitation. Although children already of primary-school, but especially

of high-school age, are relaxing group ties with their family in favour of their peer culture, parent reading (being more often observed than peer reading) normally has a greater effect on the child's attitude towards reading. Visibility, it has been found, positively affects imitation and is thus a necessary condition if the parent wishes to mould the child into an enthusiastic reader. The child needs assurance that his parents are active readers now instead of being informed that they were once, but do not seem to enjoy reading any longer. It would therefore be the ideal to have parents who are avid readers, thus making the pleasure of reading obvious to the child (Cashdan, 1969: 7, 9; Clarke, 1969: *; McDormand, 1968: 121).

It is therefore desirable for parents to be observed as being actively associated with reading because wrote Fred Hechinger, "Unless books, newspapers and magazines are part of the living-room furniture, they won't be part of the furniture of the child's mind" (cited in Rapport, 1956: 757).

If the books on the bookshelf date back to the parents' last years of study and appear to be there only as a status symbol, they are unlikely to encourage children to read (Mann, 1971: 30-1).

It is actually not too important whether or not the child's enjoyment of reading is pretended initially, because in imitating the parent the habit will grow - most habits usually beginning by imitation (Millin, 1950: 4). What is

important, however, is that the child observes his parents absorbed in reading. This will probably serve as a real stimulus when he begins to learn to translate into words the signs and symbols which are part and parcel of reading. To neglect this, Gagliardo feels, is to neglect giving the child one of his greatest experiences (Gagliardo, 1971: 5). The parent should also be seen to enjoy reading aloud to others, for this may kindle the child's interest both because he sees others enjoying themselves while he himself is under no direct pressure (Cashdan, 1969: 9).

A culturally pleasant environment helps to convey the idea that reading is a natural habit. It seems that the parental attitude towards books is absorbed by the child and sets the mood when he is faced with the effort of having to learn to read (Buzzing, 1963: 94):

> "Daniel was not frightened because he was accustomed to the atmosphere of learning. At home, Jacob often sat with the child cradled on his lap while he went on with his reading, and since his father seemed to get so much pleasure from his reading Daniel confidently assumed that he too would find it enjoyable. He waited for the lesson to start" (Langley, 1980: 53).

If the child has learned a love of reading through observing his parent his attitude towards learning both the skill and the effort will tend to be of a positive nature.

3.2.9 **PARENTAL APPROVAL** (cf. also 2.1.6 and 3.2.4)

Parental attitudes towards both their own and their children's reading tends to be absorbed by their children in

much the same manner as does their enjoyment or otherwise of the activity of reading.

Parents are cautioned not to compare their child's progress with that of other children. Rather, there should be cognisance of the fact that each child has an individual pattern and rate of learning. If genuine interest is shown in the work the child brings home,that interest is likely to encourage him to do his best work (Harrington, 1971: 56). The parent should praise the child who reads, while avoiding an insistence that he does so. They should be cautious in guarding against their form of interest being converted into a comprehension test (Cashdan, 1969: 8).

If children realize that the contact with books and magazines on the whole meet with parental approval, they will normally be more predisposed to read, especially if they regard this as evidence of affection (Clarke, 1969: *). Such approval may be reinforced by giving a book as an extra or unexpected reward, while care needs to be taken to avoid leaving the impression that the reward is a main present, as eventually that may well cause resentment on the part of the child (Cashdan, 1969: 8).

3.2.10 **PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS** (cf. also 2.1.4)

Parents are advised to examine their motives for wanting their children to read. They should know whether they encourage their children to read for the attainment of pleasure, for stimulation towards greater emotional aware-

ness, for knowledge or for vocational success. Care should be taken not to over-emphasize the latter at the expense of the other goals, but rather to unite them under 1 umbrella (Cashdan, 1969: 7).

Allegedly inspired by the concern regarding education in a multi-racial society by such people as Bolton and Laishley (1972) Durojaiye's report of the results of research conducted during the 1970s among a multi-racial group of children in Britain is worthy of note in this respect. West Indian, Asian and British children were tested in her investigation. These children were asked how many books they borrowed and how much time they spent per week at both the school and the public libraries. It was found that the Asians studied, used and borrowed more books on average than either of the other 2 cultural groups at both types of libraries. She concluded that these findings could be attributed to the fact that the parents of the West Indian and British children participating in the research project generally came from solid working-class families and, as a consequence, tended to adopt easy-going attitudes, to confine their newspaper reading to the popular press and to place little emphasis on book reading. The Asian children in the experiment, on the other hand, belonging on the whole to home-centred, aspiring working-class families, in which emphasis was laid on the family as a unit within which the children and parents shared leisure activities at home and outside. These activities included reading of a fairly high

quality. Thus, the Asian children were encouraged to study and to join youth clubs. Job prospects were discussed and parental aspirations were relatively high (Durojaiye, 1973: 118-21)

In research undertaken with 7 year olds as a follow up of the 1958 research (cf. 2.2.8) it was found that fewer Scottish than English children had problems in adjusting to the school situation. A tentative reason suggested is that it may be due to the fact that the stated parental aspirations of the Scots for their children are higher than those stated by English parents (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 153).

Often such aspirations can best be served on neutral ground where there is less pressure (cf. 2.1.6) and the parent is advised to enquire if the local library has story hours. Patience is what is needed, rather than a frontal attempt at moulding his ideas (Cashdan, 1969: 8-9).

3.2.11 **BOOK OWNERSHIP** (cf. also 2.2.4, 2.2.8.1, 3.3.2.4 and 4.3.1.2)

A child must own books so as to have the opportunity to pore over them and savour them until they become part of him. In fact, books which are constantly consulted need to be owned (Read, 1951: 15). The White House conference on child health and protection during the depression years some 50 years ago reported that on the whole owned books were read, reread and lent, concluding therefore that such books greatly in-

fluenced the child (Milam, 1932: 50). Moreover, it was found that children enjoyed developing their own libraries (Buzzing, 1963: 584-6). For this reason parents were advised to encourage the buying, exchanging and collecting of books just as they would encourage such hobbies as stamp collecting (Rapport, 1956: 757). Ideally parents should share with the child the books which belong to him in an attempt at alleviating solitary reading habits (Williams, 1971: 19-20). It is interesting to note that an authority such as Chambers even doubts whether the book-reading habit can develop unless the child owns his own books (Chambers, 1969: 116). Libraries are advised to provide assistance to parents towards the development of home libraries and reading (Konopleva, 1975: 56-8).

As part of a program of parent education, parents should be encouraged to permit, or, better still, schedule reading for pleasure at home. A planned program of parent education can help to dispel the attitude that such reading is frivolous. It is this very attitude which can be the cause of reluctant reading because it is unlikely that the child will set store on a value which the parent scorns (Lowrie, 1962: 115).

Books, or even a booklist, can be sent home with a friendly note. Parents will feel involved and pleased to be noticed. It is suggested that such books as Bequest of wings by Annis Duff (Viking Press, 1944) and her The longer flight (Viking Press, 1955), which tell of a family's pleasure with books and are both available in paperback, can be circulated among

adults, exposing them to to the possibilities of nurturing a taste for and love of the beauty of culture, art, music and literature (Polette & Hamlin, 1975: 24-7).

The literature deals not only with book ownership in general but also with the issue of personal bookshelves in particular. It is considered important that such books should not be mixed with the adult books of the household but rather be placed in the child's personal bookshelf. This should not merely comprise a space in a cupboard. Instead it should indeed be a proper bookshelf in its own right which would foster the tradition of book ownership in the child (Melcher, 1956: 749). To an avid reader it may seem superfluous to advise parents to provide children with their own bookshelves in an effort to develop reading habits that will extend beyond childhood, but Dupee's findings (mid-fifties) that only 12% of houses erected in the United States have built-in bookshelves should serve as a sober reminder that traditional book ownership is not to be taken for granted (Dupee, 1956: 6). In Britain, in the 1970s, Mann observed that bookshelves cannot easily be bought in the average furniture shop (Mann, 1971: 31).

Although the lending libraries, both public and school, play their part in fostering reading habits, it would seem that research corroborates the above viewpoints, viz. that the owned book, the book bought at the bookshop and kept in the home, has the greatest influence. Mann concluded from investigations conducted in Britain that reading habits indi-

cate that the involvement with books in the case of the library user was not, on average, as great as that of the bookshop user (Mann, 1971: 149).

Thus it would seem that there is a consensus of opinion among the writers surveyed that book ownership and personal bookshelves are important factors to consider when trying to prevent the emergence of reluctant readers.

3.2.12 DICTATING A LETTER

It is in the power of the parent to demonstrate to the child that the written and the spoken word are of equal importance and knowledge of the former can greatly enhance the quality of the child's life.

An idea recommended by one of the writers is that a child may be encouraged to dictate letters to a family member which are intended for some other person or persons, e.g. a grandmother living some distance away. This would be a means of contributing to the linguistic skills underlying the child's reading ability and enjoyment. Having recorded the child's dictation, the person concerned should then read the letter back to him, thus establishing a more personal connection between the child's spoken word on the one hand, and the verbal world of writing and reading on the other. It is believed that this will intrigue the child and is likely to motivate him towards developing such advanced skills for himself (Gagliardo, 1971: 8).

3.2.13 BOOK AVAILABILITY

The most direct approach, i.e. to advise the child to read specific titles, is not necessarily the best one to follow. Parents should perhaps rather be advised to provide a congenial environment conducive to promoting the reading habit by ensuring that books of varying kinds are readily available when the child wishes to browse. Such wide-ranging book availability can best be achieved by books both owned and borrowed (Cashdan, 1969: 8; Chambers,1977(a): 574).

Both in the practical matters of everyday life and in the hours of leisure the person who is well read, and enjoys reading for its own sake will tend to have the advantage over the non-reader (McDormand, 1968: 121).

It is therefore important for a child to be widely read, as he will thus tend to mature with a broad range of interests and a large vocabulary. These qualities in turn should stimulate the child to read and reinforce the reading habit.

3.2.14 QUALITY OF HOME LIFE (cf. also 2.2.2)

A decisive influence in the child's development, according to Simsova, is the parental attitude towards and interest in his reading. She contends that a child coming from a household where he receives quantities of books and where he can observe that books are a part of daily life, will tend to be a more advanced reader than a child whose parents spend all their leisure hours watching television (Simsova, 1962: 15).

In so far as this statement may be accepted as valid, it follows that reading must form part of a regular daily family routine. Authorities agree on this point, however, insisting that reading should preferably be conducted as a family activity in the interests of the child. A quiet period should be set aside for reading at least once every week, and before or after a television or radio program the books relevant to the topics of the programs should be referred to or read (Rapport, 1956: 757).

Another factor which may affect reading is the playing of word games as a common occurrence within the child's home environment. In a study undertaken by Harrington she found that if games such as rhyming words are played, the child is less likely to become a reluctant reader. On the basis of this investigation she claims to have support for the contention that the quality of home life directly affects the child's reading habits. She therefore advises concerned parents to ensure that the child receives sufficient rest and to take steps to avoid the child leaving for school in an unhappy frame of mind. Tiredness and unhappiness, she maintains will have a negative effect on learning (Harrington, 1971: 55).

It is not sufficient to provide an atmosphere of learning if there is no place of comfort in which such learning may be pursued. A child can be protected from the enticing distractions of the home activities by providing heating in his room. Further suggestions are the provision of good bedside

lights and the prevention of interruptions while the child is reading. If the child shares his room a bookshelf-type room divider would be a positive innovation to ensure a measure of privacy (Williams, 1971: 88). Children who read for pleasure usually nominate their preferred time of reading as just before going to sleep (Nell, 1978(b): 65) Therefore it would indicate that the effort to make his experience as pleasant as possible is worthwhile.

Parents can be of help by aiding the child in the organization of a schedule which will allow time for reading. This is apparently of great importance, because

> "Where the book reading time is maximum - independent of IQ, socio-economic level, or entering achievement level - reading gains are the greatest. Even standardized test vocabulary scores, which rarely increase over short periods of time, jump significantly" (Cohen, 1976: 714).

After collecting evidence from a questionnaire, Inglis cautions that parents who have provided for such reading time should not cajole their children as to how it should be used, as he had found that children prefer to read in conditions of their own choice, when they wish and for long periods (Inglis, 1969: 172). He makes no mention of how to deal with children who do not read at all.

It is concluded, by Chambers, that if every home were to adopt some of the major suggestions referred to above and owned a small library (between 200-500 books) the number of reluctant readers would be far fewer than existed at the time of writing (Chambers, 1969: 115).

3.2.15 KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The establishment of a sustained reading habit requires a broader base than children will acquire if they read only round their own interests. The reason why their range of reading material is so restricted may be attributed to a lack of awareness of other possibilities on the children's part, therefore parents are advised to become acquainted with good children's literature so as to be in the position to guide the reading of their children in such a manner that their reading interests cover a wider spectrum (Van Zyl, 1964: 426; Larrick, 1956: 164).

Another problem which may result from a lack of knowledge of children's books is that it is natural to select what is known and therefore many adults in selecting books which they knew as children, purchase books which are at least a generation out of date (Mann, 1971: 13-4).

It could be concluded from the literature surveyed in this thesis that there is a general consensus that the person's pattern of behaviour is governed by early parent/child relationships. Parents have both an active and a passive role to play in the prevention of reluctant reading among their children. They can actively encourage their children to read by adopting a positive attitude to reading and by providing both suitable reading material and an environment, both physical and mental, which is conducive to reading. Their passive role is no less important, for they need to be seen

to believe in the value of reading which they propagate. It is their tacit approval which will tend to be a deciding factor in the child's willingness to endeavour to become a reader (cf. also 3.2.8).

3.3 COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

On the whole the first influence on a child emanate from his home, but as he grows older and his world expands, there are other influences which play a significant role in his development, such as his friends and acquaintances, neighbours and community institutions and services (Cleary, 1972: 30).

In many cases the home is unable to supply satisfactory stimulation for the child, owing to a variety of factors, ranging from economics to ignorance. It is especially in such cases that the community has an important role to play. The organization of projects through various services directed at the pre-school child helps to rectify the cultural deficiencies of the home and also is a useful supplement for children whose homes are adequately reading orientated.

The school is a community institution which has a vital role to play in preventing reluctant readers. Within its walls it can establish a school library from which may emanate many projects intended to encourage reading. However, the school library and the school librarian are not alone in the battle

to prevent children from becoming reluctant readers, the principal and the teaching staff being of no less importance.

The public library and the public librarian often provide the child's first contact with books and may be his only contact with books outside of school hours. Their role in the reduction of the incidence of reluctant readers is therefore also of major importance.

Aside from these institutions there are other factors in society which may influence the child's decision as to whether he will become a reader or not. These include the mass media, the quality of the storytellers he hears, book festivals and booksellers.

3.3.1 PROJECTS DIRECTED AT THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD (cf. also 2.2.8)

The literature indicates that attempts to prevent the emergence of reluctant readers should, if possible, begin at the earliest possible point in the child's life. As early as the sixteenth century, St Ignatius expressed the belief that if he were to be given a child for the first 7 years of the child's life, his teachings would create the habits of the man into whom the child would grow. The validity of this claim has been borne out by the psychologists of the twentieth century.

Numerous investigations have been undertaken to determine whether institutionalized children, e.g. children living in

orphanages generally develop at a rate lower than that of children brought up in their own homes, on the assumption that the former are deprived of much of the care and attention usually lavished on the child who lives within the conventional family environment. The child in the institution, even if given love and attention, is still deprived of knowing that there are particular people who belong to him only (or at the very least also to his siblings),and whose behaviour sets a pattern for him to follow. The investigations of Spitz (1945: 59, 64-71), Goldfarb (1945: 24-32) and Ribble (1944: 643-4, 646-7) corroborate the evidence that institutionalized children tend to suffer developmentally in factors which will affect reading. Even attempts to divide institutionalized children into small 'family' units have not been fully successful but have tended, however, to alleviate conditions (Pervin, 1970: 49).

One reason suggested for the institutionalized child's slower learning rate is that having never known family love, he is not anxious about losing such love and approval should he fail to learn successfully (Pringle, 1970: 93).

The important role played by parental guidance in child development has already been discussed in section 3.2. Children, no less than animals, growing up in a limited home environment will tend to be severely restricted in their development.

According to research undertaken by McClellan (1951) responses acquired at an early age are potent, thus

rendering the unlearning of these responses extremely difficult. This may prove an obstacle when new learning and attitudes, such as those within the school environment, are attempted (Pervin, 1970: 51).

The importance of the early years to child development was also emphasized by the eminent psychiatrist Freud who considered the first 5 years to be critical (Pervin, 1970: 246). Eminent developmental psychologists, such as Gesell and Piaget, have devoted a major portion of their research to exploring the child's first 5 years, investigating the importance of this period of the child's life to his development which includes both the skill and joy of reading.

The importance of the early years in a child's development are stressed by Estes who reports that John Fisher of Columbia University maintained that by the age of 4, there was substantial evidence that the level of intellectual capability to be achieved at 17 was already half determined, of which 30% more was achieved by the age of 7 (Estes, 1969: 221).

Research corroborates the importance of motivation in the first 5 years. It is concluded from the follow up research on 7-year olds undertaken in Britain in the 1960s (cf. 2.2.8) that equal education cannot be achieved solely by improving educational institutions. To achieve this it is necessary to compensate for environmental deprivation as early as the pre-school years and to continue the process

during the school years (Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972: 190).

Against this background it is not surprising that the Bullock report (1975: 54, 57-61) stresses the importance of providing parents with the knowledge necessary for creating an intellectual and stimulating background for their children. The report states accordingly that there are 2 priority needs, viz. (a) that children should be introduced to books in their pre-school years and (b) educating parents so that they will understand the importance of sharing book reading with their children (Bullock, 1975: 97).

If libraries are to establish the contact advised by the Bullock report it is the librarian who will have a significant role to play. Elkin may well have had these recommendations in mind when she wrote the following:

> "During the vital, formative, pre-school years, librarians have a responsibility to instill a reading habit, a love of books, or stories, of poems, so that the child when he reaches school, has an incentive to learn to read. If we follow this with story/activity/book sessions of all kinds at every stage of the child's development, with every level of ability and disability, we can hope that he will begin to read for pleasure; to read for information. He will become a regular user of the library for a wide variety of purposes and will remain so, albeit intermittently, for the rest of his life" (Elkin, 1976: 159).

The literature reflects a consensus that the community has a responsibility to the child both directly and indirectly, for it should not only bring books and children together but should aid parents in meeting those responsibilities outlined in section 3.2. Despite Simsova's (1962: 15) con-

clusions that toddlers indeed have an inherent interest in reading as an extension of their inborn curiosity, the concept that environmental influences predominate has been postulated by such writers as Chambers (1973: 16) and Cleary (1972). An attempt will therefore be made to survey the major kinds of programs which have been devised to facilitate book reading among children.

The amount of space devoted to each project does not reflect the importance of the project itself, but is dependent upon the information available in the literature surveyed. The first programs to be described will be those which have been organized to affect a large group of people. These will be followed by programs directed primarily at those who visit the particular organization concerned.

3.3.1.1 Swedish pre-schoolers: The Swedish public library system endeavours to reach pre-school children, not only with the aid of books, but also with brochures containing information about books and libraries. The aim is to make books and reading a necessary part of everyday living.

In order to achieve this they have designed and developed an active program for the pre-schooler. The first contact with the child is made via the child-care centres where brochures and books from the library stock are deposited in the waiting rooms. Fifteen hours per year are given to each group of pre-schoolers i.e. 3 years old or older, during which the librarian visits and tells stories, the idea being

to introduce children, while still in their own environment, to a librarian from the public library. Once per month the same children are taken on a visit to the library for storytelling and book borrowing (Karlsson, 1976: 81-2).
It is hoped that by the time the children enter school, reading and visiting the library will have become a habit and they will regard the librarian in a kindly light.

3.3.1.2 **Projects 'Head start', 'Right to read' and 'Reading is fundamental'**: (cf. also 2.2.8) These 3 projects are all designed to combat ignorance.
Project 'Head start' has been named thus because it attempts to enrich the child's environment. Parental ignorance is often the reason why children are not stimulated within the home environment. Therefore, as this project is directed at giving children sufficient head start at an early age to acquire school-readiness, it necessitates parental involvement. The project entails the active participation of parents. It endeavours to establish in the parents a certain level of receptivity to both books and reading, which it is hoped they in turn will pass on to their children (Granstrom, 1976(b): 120).
A similar program to 'Head start' is 'Right to read', which is designed to foster reading-readiness in the child by educating both child and parent, and through the establishment of a good reading program (Granstrom, 1976(b): 120).
In the project 'Reading is fundamental' books are donated to

children and adults, in response to a dire need revealed in recent research demonstrating that many people have never owned books. It is thought that book donations to deprived families may well stimulate library use (Granstrom, 1976(b): 120-1).

The above 3 projects and many other related ones are claimed to have developed out of a new awareness of the environmental poverty of disadvantaged Americans. Granstrom sees projects of this kind as being part of a realization that it is inadequate for the librarian merely to reach the child: a need exists to go beyond this step and to make contact with the parents (Granstrom, 1976(b): 121).

3.3.1.3 **'Good start' program**: Many school systems in the West discourage parents from teaching their children to read as a precaution against the danger that such teaching may well be incompatible with that of the system concerned, thus necessitating a difficult process of relearning when the child begins school. There are educationalists, moreover, who believe that there are 2 additional disadvantages to this early learning per se, viz. (a) that children who come to school equipped with a reading ability may become bored while waiting for their lesser-developed peers to catch up with them, and (b) that such learning may often be damaging in so far as the parent tends to be emotionally involved with his child, finding it difficult to cope with the possibility of failure on the part of the child. There are other

educationalists who believe that by the time the child turns 6 the urge to learn and read has begun to subside.

The 'Good start' program was designed to prevent this and is a reading-readiness program designed to instill a joy of learning. It is based on the premise (cf. Piaget 3.3.1) that the first 5 years of a child can be the most productive, and that it is during these years that the parent spends more time with the child than does any other individual. Parents therefore have a need to know how best to help their children, and accordingly they need to learn how to teach their children to learn.

The program consisted of 2 periods per week each of 2 hours' duration. In the one period parent and child were separated, but joined at the other. Games and toys were used to help in the child's development, e.g. auditory discrimination was taught by shaking a can and requiring that the child find which of the cans, when shaken, sounded the same. The child's interest spectrum was broadened by organized excursions. To assist the mothers' understanding of their children's development, talks were given on such subjects as pre-school books. At the end of each session mothers and their children, selected books together. After the course the children received weekly home visits for a follow-up and to exchange books and toys.

The program is reported to have been a success on the whole. Mothers generally felt more able to cope with their children and developed a sense of their importance in the child's

development. As a rule they became more predisposed towards regarding the child as a person and began to know how to play with him (Newcomb, 1974: 542-5).

3.3.1.4 **'Dial-a-story'**: This was a pre-school program planned as an item to draw attention to the 'Early childhood' project of San Francisco's Public Library (cf. also 3.3.1.3). Two telephone lines operated every day on a round-the-clock basis, and carrying the same programs. These comprised 3-minute recordings of stories, poems and songs which were changed weekly. Bookmarks in English, Spanish and Chinese, inviting children to use the facility, were distributed, although the stories were only in English. These bookmarks were distributed in all libraries and pre-school agencies and the service was advertised in the newspapers and on television and radio.

It was found that in response to the program children felt encouraged to come to the library for story hour and to ask for the books heard on the telephone. More lines were soon needed, because there were about 10,000 people per week who found the numbers to be already engaged when they telephoned. The service was widely patronized, being used even by adults who wished to learn English (Geistlinger, 1976: 105-8).

In Illinois, USA, there is a similar service. The library provides a 24-hour selection of tape-recorded children's stories. These tape recordings have been edited to last 3

minutes and children telephoning a given number may listen to them (I gotta make a call ..., 1974: 2708-10).

It is not only the parents of the disadvantaged who need to be educated about children's literature and the best manner in which to introduce books to their children. Many schemes have been devised to accomplish this end and the 'Early childhood' project and the 'Early childhood library specialist' program are but 2 of them.

3.3.1.5 **'Early childhood' project**: (cf. also 3.2.15) 'Dial-a-story' (cf. also 3.3.1.4) is just 1 aspect of a wider project undertaken by San Francisco's Public Library. Another aspect is based on a collection of books and pamphlets related to all stages of early childhood, being a reference section housed in the children' library. Circulating copies may however be obtained in the adult library. The collection contains titles in both English and Spanish. This is due to the large Spanish-speaking population resident in San Francisco.

This project is intended to fulfill a twofold purpose, being designed not only to help parents to be better informed, but to bring them into the children' library. This will, it is hoped, make them aware of the books and activities available for their children (Ruth, 1976: 151-4).

3.3.1.6 'Early childhood library specialist' program: (cf. also 3.2.1) In 1971-1972 the North Carolina Central University School of Library Science decided to organize a program which would show parents how to introduce books to their children. They advertised the project and, after interviewing people who replied to the advertisement, 6 parents were selected for a 1 week conference. A follow-up quarterly program was included. Parents kept an activity card of child/parent activities which were discussed at these meetings (Young, 1976: 129-30).

It was not considered sufficient to educate only parents, because there are others who also come into contact with the pre-schooler and whose influence on their later reading habits can be profound. It was with this in mind that the program 'Emergency' was developed.

3.3.1.7 'Emergency': This is the name of a resource collection program at the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy, USA. It is designed for pre-schoolers and can be used in and out of the library by adults who work with children. It includes 4 books (all available in paperback) felt-board stories, non-commercial material, filmstrips, pictures and books on the technique of storytelling. It also provides in-service training and a guide as to how best to run story hours (Granstrom, 1976(a): 109-13).

The importance of hearing the printed word on a daily basis was discussed in section 3.2.6. Projects such as the 'Read to me' club were established to encourage parents to read to their children.

3.3.1.8 **'Read to me' Club**: This club, established in San Bernadine, California, USA, is

> "designed to introduce the pre-schooler to books, promote and stimulate early reading interest, develop book appreciation, and to encourage parental involvement through reading aloud to their children" (Wolff, 1972: 648).

The organizers of the club believe that the first spark of interest shown by the child must be fanned. To facilitate this, pre-schoolers receive certificates, as do children who participate in the library's summer reading program, if 10 books have been read to such pre-schoolers. This is usually at a rate of 2 books per week. The pre-schooler stamps his achievement (each book to which he has listened) with an owl on a tree.

Most children complete the assignment, i.e. having 10 books read to them and it has proved a new adventure even for those to whom books are usually read. The pre-schoolers are thrilled to belong to something to which their older siblings also belong (Wolff, 1972: 648-9).

3.3.1.9 **Story hours**: (cf. also 2.2.5 and 2.2.6) The basic motive for holding story hours for pre-school children is to make them keen library users. For the child it means an hour

of intellectual stimulation and entertainment a week. This is very important for many children who may be suffering from cultural isolation, especially those with working parents. During story hours questions may be answered, linguistic skills will be developed and a new insight gained about the adult world (Fallberg, 1973: 112, 114).

Most libraries have some type of story hour. Interesting and perhaps a little unusual is one which was held for toddlers at Greensburgh Public Library, Pennsylvania, USA, which conducts story hours for 2-year olds, but insists that every child be accompanied by a parent. The program exposes parents to stories for this age group. It also demonstrates to parents why these children are not yet ready for the preschool story hour, because at this very young age they still tend to be disruptive. The system introduces the children to the library in a very happy atmosphere.

To promote the project a birthday-book program was established. Each parent is asked to obtain an appointment for his child so that the child can be presented with a paperback picture book on his second birthday. At the time of the appointment the parents are shown round the children's library and invited to participate in library programs. The library hopes that by these methods they will be able to involve both parent and child in regular library participation (Markowsky, 1977: 29-30).

3.3.1.10 **Toys and games**: Another method of attracting both parents and pre-schoolers to the library is by providing toys and games which enable parents to experiment with them before purchasing. This is very important, especially in times of financial stringency. Cawthorne maintains that the practice and motor skills required for reading, e.g. eye development, can be acquired not only with books but also with toys and games. These are not only for play but can be of use in preparing children for reading readiness (Cawthorne, 1975: 24).

When organizing pre-school projects it may be found that children do not settle down and enjoy themselves readily if they are separated from their parents. A solution to this problem may be to have a dual program running concurrently. This may combine lectures on the value of reading to children or the use of rhythm and rhyme, a film, a book talk, a craft session and time to browse and partake of a quiet cup of coffee (Corrier, 1976: 155-6).

An added advantage of such programs is that the parents having for the first time become aware of the full range of facilities of the library may themselves become eager library users (Corrier, 1976: 160).

Much has been written in this section of the importance of educating parents as well as children. In an attempt to achieve this in some small way, magazines for adults can be introduced into the home by the libraries. This is an economic move, because magazines are comparatively cheap and can

be read by more than 1 person in the household. Some communities have even been persuaded to include library literature with their accounts, such as those for electricity (Granstrom, 1976(b): 125).

It can be seen that most of the community services which focus on the pre-school child tend to emanate from the public libraries. At the next stage of the child's development it is the school which tends to have the largest influence on the child's life.

3.3.2 **SCHOOL** (cf. also 2.3.1)

The school probably exercises the most decisive community influence on the child' development as a reader. It is usually here that he acquires the basic reading skills. It is generally accepted, however, that the teaching of reading skills is but a limited part of the school's task in reducing the incidence of reluctant reading. Therefore it is appropriate to examine the other factors, viz. the school library and the principal and his staff, which combine in this educational endeavour.

Sampson suggests that

> "Schools should be for the less fortunate child what home is for the more fortunate, a place where there is work but where there is also laughter, a place where there is law but where there is also grace, a place where there is justice but where there is also love" (Sampson, 1934: xiv-xv).

To achieve this objective Sampson suggests that the child

should be given opportunities for the creation and development of, amongst other things, initiative, imagination, privacy, and be taken on excursions to places of interest and beauty, to which his parents may not have taken him. Sampson insists that the emphasis should be placed on praising the child's work by displaying it before the class rather than by emphasizing his marks.

3.3.2.1 Establishment of the school library: (cf. also 2.3.1.6) The importance of the existence of a school library was revealed in a 1974 survey conducted among 600 school-going pupils, ranging between the ages of 11 and 14, in North Walford, England. It was found that although 86% of the pupils used the school library, only 43% borrowed books from the public library, even though 54% were actually registered members. Non-use of the public library was attributed to either distance or to the need for books being catered for by the school library (Jones, 1976: 573). The writer does not make it clear as to who conducted this research but it was prompted by the growth and improvement of school libraries at the 11- to 14-year old level, coupled with a marked drop in the use of the public library.

The negative effects of a lack of school library facilities was examined in section 2.3.1.6. In this section the positive effects in the prevention of reluctant readers will be examined. School libraries are important because they give children an opportunity to practice reading skills by pro-

viding an easily available source of suitable literature and a librarian to guide the child to the book suited to his stage of development. School libraries usually encourage worthwhile books and enable children to find information in addition to that found in school textbooks. If a school - library is established there are further advantages, of which its accessibility is a major factor. Such a library, if manned by an efficient librarian, can be used to supplement and unify the curriculum and to act as an information source for children and teachers. It is in the school library, main-tains Hall, that children should be taught the use of li- brary facilities and be assisted in gaining the skills need-ed for personal research, 2 qualities which tend to encou rage the establishment of permanent reading habits (Hall, 1960: 112). Even kindergarten children should, according to Wilkens, have regular story hours in the school library and be allowed to select pictures for their classrooms, thus easing their way gradually into the library and towards becoming permanent and enthusiastic library users (Wilkens, 1975: 30).

It is important, write Henne, that pupils should be informed of the existence of the public library and taken there on visits so as to acquaint themselves with its services. On the other hand, however, it should never be regarded as a substitute for the school library (Henne, 1955: 41, 43).

The blame for adult non-use of public libraries was placed by the Public Library Inquiry, on the schools. Unless con-

tact is made between the library services and children it is unlikely that they will reach adulthood either capable of or interested in reading. It is within the school's mandate to educate its pupils to enjoy reading and to evaluate literature, also to motivate them into using the library and its resources as fully as possible. The practice of regular usage of the school library will probably do more to establish life-long reading habits than any other factor (Henne, 1955: 44-5).

A firm believer in the importance of establishing school libraries, Blishen, states from his experience as a school librarian in Britain that "nothing done in our new schools... has been of more benefit to the children than the establishment of school libraries" (Blishen, 1957: 14).

He bases his assertion on observations made over a period of 7 years (from 1950 to 1957). Most of the children with whom he dealt had never used a library, and tended to dislike the idea. Yet, when the school library opened, it soon became the most popular area in the school. Initially it was regarded solely as a meeting place, but soon its popularity became based on its primary purposes of book borrowing and reading. He found that, whereas only 1 in 10 pupils borrowed from the public library at the beginning of this 7 year period, by the end of it 7 out of 10 pupils borrowed from the school library (Blishen, 1957: 15).

In South Africa recognition of the need for school libraries generally, and an awareness that most black schools were

without this amenity led to the formation in Johannesburg of READ in 1979, which amalgamated with an independent group based in Cape Town in 1982. Its aims are twofold, viz.:

> "To set up libraries in schools
>
> To train and motivate teachers to use the books to develop in the pupils a love of reading and the skills of independant enquiry and research" (READ).

High schools receive a core reference library which supports and goes beyond the syllabus, a stock of general reading books (mainly fiction) and workshops for teachers designed to instruct them on the running of libraries and the development of their pupils' library and reading skills (READ). Hamilton Dlamlenze, Secretary-General African Teachers' Association of S.A. comments:

> "What is important is that READ isn't a handout. The way in which the library is created requires school and community involvement. It's more than a formula for better education - it's a strategy for pride, dignity and confidence. We need these qualities as much as we need spoken fluency and written comprehension" (A READ library ...an investment in your future).

Thus it would seem that the literature fully endorses the necessity and importance of establishing a well stocked and professionally manned school library which will complement rather than substitute for the public library.

At Harvard University, USA, research was undertaken in which it was found that if a library is established in a school and a guidance program conducted there it will be a positive educational force (Cleary, 1972: 11).

On the assumption that the joy of reading depends upon in-

terests, and that such interests can be developed if children can be convinced that reading is important, it is an advantage if books are made readily available by the school, in the form of the school library. It is also an advantage if as many paths as possible in the school should lead past the library which in any event should be regarded as an essential part of the school (Blishen, 1968: 29; Gates, 1956: 166).

The school library has an advantage over the public library in that its users come from a limited group, usually visiting the library on a regular, increasingly compulsory basis and about whom any information required by the librarian is fairly easily available (Rossouw, 1976: 19) (cf. also 3.3.2.1.2.1). This very intimacy may, however, prove to be disadvantageous in the librarian's dealings with his pupils (cf. also 4.3.2). Although there have been moves, for reasons usually of economics to merge the public library and the school library, it has generally been decided that both have a part to play in the prevention of reluctant reading. One cannot substitute for the other but both must work, each in its unique manner, dovetailing to achieve the same ends, viz. a child who enjoys reading and who will carry the habit into adulthood.

3.3.2.1.1 <u>Librarian/architect relationship</u>: When a new library is planned. even though the services of an architect are engaged, the librarian should be brought into the

planning and should have the final decision, as he is professionally trained to fully understand its needs. It is he who is aware of the daily wear and tear to which the library will be subjected and it is he who is the planner of its educa- tional program. The librarian knows which material will be needed most and therefore which material should be nearest at hand. The result of combining the knowledge of 2 professionals should ideally result in the best possible library (Cleary, 1972: 105).

3.3.2.1.2 <u>Reading guidance within the library</u>: The importance of reading guidance within the library was investigated by Cleary, Allen and Allen in the late 1960s. They conducted research on the effect of a library-centred reading guidance program on the reading skills and habits of primary school children. Such children are usually under the age of 13. Those who are approximately 13 to 14 years and older are children who attend high school. The researchers concluded, on the basis of their findings, that the traditional library period was ineffective. This type of library period is one in which children come to the library so as to return, choose and borrow books, the process usually being unaccompanied by adult help. At most a story will be read aloud to the children after they have completed their borrowing of books. The researchers therefore recommended the development of a school-co-ordinated, librarian-orientated program. They also established a direct corre-

lation between reading efficiency and the benefit received from such a program, although in their view, guidance programs affected interest but not skill. They recommended therefore that reading efficiency should be improved so that maximum benefit could be derived from the library program. Cleary and other researchers defined a librarian as a skilled officer who does not only select, organize and make available instructional material, but is also a professional educationalist, a full member of the instructional staff concerned and responsible for the learning and reading of the pupils of the school. Their report recommends that 2 periods of 1 1/2 hours each per week should be spent in the library by all pupils in a class situation, supervised by the librarian. One of these periods should be devoted entirely to reading guidance and the other to the guided selection of books, browsing, reading and the issuing of books. They admitted that it is doubtful whether children will learn to enjoy the act of reading simply by practising it but that a variety of devices may stimulate greater interest in books (Cleary, Allen & Allen,1968: 2, 49, 60). Another writer who was concerned with the concept of reading guidance was Anderson, who maintained that if a child was going to continue to be a reader, it was necessary not only to satisfy his present needs but also to broaden his interests and to develop his reading tastes. He recommended some 40 years ago, that when a reading guidance program is designed differences in learning must be considered

(Anderson, 1940: 218, 253). This classical view is endorsed by Cleary, who emphasizes that programs designed for the slow learner must differ greatly from those planned for the gifted. She also considers it necessary that there should be an understanding of the motivating factors which affect learning (Cleary, 1972: 50).

Moreover, guidance programs should include many facets. Cleary suggests that such programs (a) should introduce worthwhile books, authors and illustrators, (b) attempt to involve children through discussion (which may in turn develop their understanding of human behaviour and values); (c) help develop library skills so that children may be enriched by the library's resources and (d) they should treat children not only as part of a group but as individuals who should be encouraged to become readers (Cleary, 1972: 143-5).

Roe agrees with Cleary that such programs cannot be conducted in isolation. Every teacher should therefore encourage reading, no matter which school subject is being taught. The educating of children, both in terms of reading skills and enjoyment, can only be achieved if teachers and librarians co-operate and work as a team. Roe points out that this educational process cannot be restricted to those periods spent in the library or attending English lessons because the skill of reading and the child's attitude towards it will affect every aspect of his progress in every subject he studies (Roe, 1965: 85-6). Cleary cautions that

this spread of teaching reading will also be of aid to the librarian who will then have more opportunity to emphasize the recreational resources of the library, an aspect which may well be forgotten if the library becomes associated only with research (Cleary, 1972: 164, 166).

The literature reflects a consensus that library-guidance programs are necessary, thus making it pertinent to investigate the types of programs advocated.

3.3.2.1.2.1 **Preparation**: Both Cleary (1972: 60, 83) and Lowrie (1962: 111) advise that before any reading guidance program can be formulated and established, a careful investigation must be done to ascertain who is to be guided and what material and time can be used for the purpose.

Various types of programs have been employed and the one which is chosen should be the one with which the librarian feels most at ease and will be of greatest assistance to the individual or group of children to be guided. It is possible to use more than 1 program and the following serve merely as guidelines as to their varying possibilities.

One of the types of programs recommended in the literature is an evaluative program. It is contended by Cleary that unless the relationship between adult and child is pleasant it is unlikely that the child will accept the adult's book recommendations. As a means of establishing such a relationship, she maintains that it is essential for the librarian to accept the child on his own terms, and not as an ideal-

ized patron. She suggests that gaining background information should help in the understanding of the child's motivations and interests.

She considers that in this endeavour the school librarian has the advantage of seeing the child on a weekly basis, has access to information, such as achievement tests and cumulative records (i.e. such information as academic achievement, sporting ability and reports on social behaviour and learning problems collated during the child's school years and sometimes including even records of the child's pre-school history). The librarian should also be able to receive feedback on the pupil's reactions to this and prior guidance programs. By these means she should be able to identify the reluctant reader and may receive an indication from the class teacher as to any special interest which may help in guiding the child to the right book. It is suggested that informal tests, quizzes and games may also be employed in assessing ability and interest (Cleary, 1972: 14, 74-7, 144-5; Lowrie, 1962: 110, 112).

Another method of guiding children is through the use of informal interviews. An informal discussion will often reveal things that will not be evident from a pupil's cumulative record. It is suggested that by showing an interest in the child, listening to what he says and sharing a little of himself with him, the librarian may not only secure information necessary for guiding the child's reading but may also help to establish the type of relationship so necessary

if the child is to accept this guidance (Cleary, 1972: 77-8).

A third method of guiding children is through reading-record cards. These are cards on which the title of every book borrowed by the child is recorded. Although these cards constitute only a record of books borrowed but not necessarily read, they often reveal a definite pattern (Cleary, 1972: 79).

Biographical and autobiographical records can be useful when organizing a reading guidance program. A record may be kept of the librarian's observations of the child's appearance and behaviour. By observing the child in many situations it may be found that this behaviour is very paradoxical. Although a child may appear to be dull and disinterested in his surroundings close observation may reveal a hitherto unnoticed interest to which the reading of books may be directed.

Another record recommended is that which can be obtained from the child in the form of an autobiography which may even include a personal record of the child's assessment of his past reading experiences (Cleary, 1972: 79).

Once the preparation has been completed, a decision can more easily be made as to which type of program will be undertaken.

3.3.2.1.2.2 **Types of programs**: There are essentially 2 types of programs, viz. those designed for the individual and

those designed for the group. Although their major aim is identical, namely to develop enthusiasm and discernment among readers, their methods of approach must of necessity be different. With reference to the literature surveyed there will first be a brief description of these 2 types of programs, followed by a more in-depth look into various programs which have been tried and found to have been successful, according to the sources consulted.

In the case of the individual program it is of importance to discover as much as possible about the individual child. Cleary advises that one should recommend several books to him, but one must not be annoyed if he chooses none of them. It is also useful to ascertain if he has extracted anything of value from his recent reading. This, she feels, is advisable because children are often under the impression that leisure reading is purely for relaxation which does not require them to think. Furthermore, when a child comes into the library to do research, one should help him to become self-sufficient, capable of using the index of a book, the catalogue and other library skills. Although a browsing child should not be ignored, he should not be made to feel that he is being carefully observed (Cleary, 1972: 147-8).

A balanced program of reading is necessary in the formative years for the development of both the facility of reading and the wish to read. Books graded according to difficulty should be given to children after they have been matched with their personal abilities. Thus the confidence of

success may be acquired, and the result will be an elimination of the faltering of reading pleasure. Encouragement would seem to be a key note (Archer, 1963: 424; Leng, 1968: 41).

The following guidelines are offered by Beatrice Hermann and Ann Schaffner (1962: 67) for the establishment of group programs:

a) although pre-planning is necessary, flexibility is equally important;

b) the librarian should be enthusiastic and should keep instructions as informal as possible;

c) patience must be shown and instructions repeated as often as necessary;

d) the use of gadgets and props for stimulation of interest is to be encouraged;

e) whenever possible, professional library terminology should be avoided and the child's conversational language be adopted; and

f) the main emphasis must fall on the enjoyment of books.

3.3.2.1.2.3 <u>Programs which have been successfully undertaken</u>: (cf. also 3.3.1 and 3.3.3.4) Bearing in mind Blishen's admonition that the "School library must be an active instrument in the attempt to create readers" (Blishen, 1974: 214), an attempt will be made to survey the literature for examples of such positive programs, the amount of attention given each to be governed by the amount

of information available in the literature rather than any personal judgment, the programs having neither been observed nor experimented with by the writer.

The school library provides reading material in an environment which provides the techniques of reading, viz. the school. Therefore, the school library is in a position to establish good reading habits, because all the children at school are exposed to it. Thus all able children should benefit ipso facto from this exposure. Unless there is a follow up the ultimate purpose of reading instruction, in so far as it constitutes the teaching of a skill but more importantly, the inculcation of an appreciation and understanding of quality reading material, may well be lost.

Children, having naturally inquiring minds, as a rule enjoy the successful acquisition of library skills so necessary as a prerequisite for deriving full benefit from the reading material with which they come in contact. It has been demonstrated that, if a child is shown how to use a dictionary and an encyclopaedia he will gain experience and confidence which in turn tend to spill over into a renewed interest in reading (Brown, 1974: 45-6).

An experiment designed to stimulate interest by linking literature with everyday subjects (cf. also 3.2.5) is described by Cleary, in which a university team of instructors worked every day over a period of 3 weeks with a group of 40 elementary school pupils, while students observed and evaluated the effect of the experiment on the literary appreciation of

these pupils. Myths and legends were entirely alien to the lives of the children in the experiment who were selected from disadvantaged communities. In fact these children had as a rule tended to have been derisive of imaginative literature as such.

With the aid of audio-visual material they were shown advertisements bearing names of classical Greek origin, such as Mercury and Atlas. Questions were asked in which the connections between such commercial names and their origin in ancient Greek and Roman mythology were highlighted. Source material was searched for, dramatics and dances created and poems were written to music. The values displayed in the tales of ancient gods were discussed and related to the lives and world of the children, thus linking the unknown to the known. The experiment built on the pupils' interest in television and gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a broader field (Cleary, 1972: 65-6).

A program which takes cognizance of the fact that peer recommendation and acceptance has a very important influence on the child (cf. also 3.1.2) is one in which pupils may jot down titles and comments on books for the perusal of their peers. A board with writing paper on it can be provided for this purpose on the library walls (Lowrie, 1962: 112).

Another idea which panders to the fact that peer approval encourages reading is the use of the book review. If children are made to do book reviews merely as a written exercise

or to check their reading it is generally found to turn them away from books. If the reviews are published for peer perusal in perhaps the school magazine or newspaper, however, a sense of pride can be engendered among the children who have written them, thus having a positive effect on their attitude towards reading (Chambers, 1973: 88; Roe, 1965: 17).

The term 'book review' does not only refer to those which children write at school, but also to reviews written by professional critics and produced commercially. The Children's Book Council of New York puts out a series of reviews which consist of bookmarks, each of which is illustrated and has an annotated list of selected titles. These can be obtained very cheaply and distributed or left where they can be seen by children (School media quarterly, 1977: 80-1).

Literary magazines containing pupils' work may be as ephemeral as a 'newspaper' on the wall or may assume the form of a fully fledged school magazine. These magazines may not contain direct book recommendations, the mere fact that a given book has exerted an influence on someone is beneficial and may stimulate interest in others (Chambers, 1973: 89).

There are also commercial book magazines. Puffin books, for example, publish a magazine called Puffin Post to which schools can subscribe (Chambers, 1973: 89).

Some teachers assume without further ado that only avid readers at school will tend to become members of school book

clubs. This, however, is a debatable claim, and if the premise were valid there can clearly be no harm in getting such readers to know each other. More importantly, though, such clubs can become centres of social activity, attracting children through programs which can include recording dramatizations, film shows and visits to exhibitions, thus creating veritable social book-centres (Chambers,1973: 93).

Another form of peer influence is if pupils can be encouraged to speak about books they have enjoyed, thus whetting the appetites of their peers. It also has the effect of converting reading, an essentially solitary occupation, into something of a social event (Chambers, 1973: 86-8).

In order to make the concept of reading and books more alive Ladera Elementary School, Menlo Park, California, USA invites authors to spend a day at the school. This visit is preceded by much publicity and the author's books and pictures are placed in an 'author's room'. Authors meet not only staff and pupils but also parents. The author's autograph is duplicated and made available to all. It is hoped that such a visit will stimulate great interest in this author's books and that this interest will in turn significantly affect the pupil's attitude to other reading (Samuelson, 1961: 827).

Another 'authors' room' which is referred to in the literature is in Greenville Elementary School Library in Wilmington, Los Angeles, USA. This room contains framed original letters and illustrations. The books to which these

relate are read and reread, awaited eagerly and recommended. The project began by writing to a few authors because it was felt that letters from them would make their books seem more alive and thus stimulate reading. Eventually also a Caldecott corner was developed in the room, in which books and related material which had won Caldecott medals were placed (Howie, 1958: 578, 581).

In order to engender a feeling of personal association with the library the Ladera Elementary School, Menlo Park, California, USA allows children to present books, selected from a collection prechosen by the librarian, to the school as Valentine gifts (Samuelson, 1961: 826). This is part of a program whereby good readers receive awards at the same assembly as good footballer. Voluntary pupil helpers and the parent helpers are also rewarded. It is hoped that, surrounded by good books and activities related to books, the rewards of reading will soon become self-evident (Samuelson, 1961: 825, 827) (cf. also 2.2.2).

The school cannot omit the parent from these programs which it designs for the purpose of reducing the incidence of reluctant reading. The importance of an educated parent body has been stressed throughout both sections 2.2 and 3.2.

It is possible for both the school library and the public library to have an open house for the local Parent-Teachers' Association. At such a meeting new children's books, records and cassettes can be heard and discussed informally over coffee. It is possible that such a meeting may decide to

form groups in order to study children's literature (Kylberg, 1974: 99).

Discussions on television, its value or otherwise, may help parents control watching and enable them to make viewing an educationally valuable experience (Polette & Hamlin, 1975: 31-8). Quizzes may also form part of the meeting, the prizes taking the form of children's books (Kylberg, 1974: 99).

These meetings will hopefully have the twofold purpose of bringing children's literature and parents together and enabling the librarian to have contact with parents, which should greatly ease his task in understanding the backgrounds of the children with whom he works. If the parent becomes involved and co-operates with him the development of many a potential reluctant reader may be avoided.

3.3.2.1.4 <u>Atmosphere of the library</u>: (cf. also 2.3.2.1.2 and 3.3.3.4.1) The atmosphere of the school library is of great importance (i.e.whether primary- or secondary-school library), but particularly in the case of the primary school the library should give an impression that it is a place where adventure, magic and happiness can be found (Cleary, 1972: 133). The furniture should be attractive but not so unusual that it becomes an obstacle. Furthermore, it is suggested that floors should be carpeted and corners provided where a child may slip away from others if the activity becomes too great (Barton, 1977: 359; Batchelor, 1961: 325). The primary school librarian should be at the door to wel-

come the class and to provide the key to the shelves of books and gay displays which help to make up the world of the library. The library has the advantage that it is the one place in the school where competitiveness is absent, the place where there can be no academic failure or success because it has no examinations (Cleary, 1972: 133). In this regard the atmosphere of the library must never be spoiled by such discipline-orientated activities as using it as a detention room (Barton, 1977: 359). To achieve a feeling of ease it is suggested that an informal reading corner can be established in the library. Another idea which gives joy to the little children who use the library is placards that take the form of library angels. These may suggest library behaviour, giving instructions as to how books should be handled (Hermann & Shaffner, 1962: 65). A bulletin board of current events and local news kept up to date in the library may encourage the child to feel at home and at the same time stimulate reading (Hermann & Shaffner, 1962: 66).

Although these recommendations are aimed at the primary school library, many of them, such as carpeting the library and having attractive furniture, are equally applicable to the secondary school library.

3.3.2.1.5 **Library periods**: Both the primary and the secondary school have library periods but as this section of the thesis is primarily concerned with the prevention of reluctant readers it is with the library periods in the pri-

mary school that we are dealing. However, most of the material in this section could be equally well applied to the secondary school. When library skills are being learned in the primary school, it is generally not essential for a teacher to be present. However, this rule does not apply when new projects are launched. Likewise, teachers should also be present during library guidance programs. It is at such times that new books, plays and poetry are introduced and time is given to browsing, silent reading and general discussion and suggestions. Moreover, the teacher will have the opportunity to explore the library on his own and increase his knowledge of children's books (McGuire & Bowden, 1962: 4584).

Generally speaking in both the primary and secondary school there are 2 types of library periods, viz. the scheduled and the flexible. The former ensures that children come to the library regularly every week. The disadvantage of the scheduled system is that it may preclude the use of the library by children needing library material, because it is always occupied. It can also leave the librarian little time for maintaining and building the collection. If on the other hand library periods are flexible, the library is used according to the needs of the moment, with teacher and librarian working together in close collaboration. The disadvantage of the flexible system is that if the class teacher feels that there is no value in reading and library use he may deprive his pupils of library experience

altogether (Cleary, 1972: 86-7).

Co-operation between reader and librarian is a matter of considerable importance in promoting the use of the school library. If the class teacher has a positive attitude towards reading this attitude will probably be conveyed to the pupils and should prove to be very supportive of the librarian's view that reading is an enjoyable and worthwhile activity. It is therefore in the interests of the children that the primary school librarian makes the effort to interest the teaching staff and principal in the library and its work. (This matter will be discussed in detail in section 3.3.2.1.8 and 3.3.2.2).

Although acknowledging that the library period may cause children to regard the time spent in the library as merely part of the curriculum if such library periods are conducted as lessons, the importance for all classes to have a scheduled period in the library, to avert the danger that some children may not have the opportunity to come and borrow books in the library is stressed by Chambers. Moreover, the library should be open at all times so as to give further opportunities for book borrowing (Chambers, 1969: 121).

A combination of both methods seems preferable whether it is in the primary or secondary school and can be achieved if the library comprises a number of reading rooms and has sufficient personnel (Cleary, 1972: 87).

Even though prevention of reluctant readers lies firmly within the scope of the primary school, curing reluctant

readers is an aim of both primary and secondary schools and therefore the formulation of their library periods have almost the same pros and cons.

3.3.2.1.6 Books and display in the library: The holdings of libraries and the manner in which they are displayed vary, but all should aim to "be an active instrument in the attempt to create readers" (Blishen, 1974: 214).

The school library should provide not only material which the librarian feels to be desirable; also, the wishes of the pupils should be taken into account. Such material may include art prints, records, tapes and cassette (James, 1978: 119).

The issue has already been discussed as to how the application of adult criteria (cf. 2.3.3.3.1) and an emphasis on the 'classics' (cf. 2.3.3.3.2) may cause children to read no books at all, instead of merely causing them to be protected against exposure to inferior literature. To prevent children from becoming reluctant readers Chambers suggests keeping Dr. Johnson's famous dictum in mind:

> "I would let (a child) first read any English book which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards" (quoted in Chambers, 1973: 121).

The stock of the school library should not be restricted to educational books but should cater for the whole range of appetites adopting an attitude which is less pedantic

(Blishen, 1974: 219). Blishen's method entails the following procedures, viz. reconciling a child to books and the library and hoping that his natural curiosity will expand both the quantity and the quality of his reading (Blishen, 1974: 216). Echoing this viewpoint, Cashdan maintains that children, especially those who lack the basic reading skills (cf. 2.1.1) should be allowed to read whatever they wish because it is believed that they are not easily corrupted, but that the skills may develop through regular practice in reading. Although the reading of inferior literature may not encourage the reading of better literature it is unlikely to make the situation worse (Cashdan, 1969: 8). Melcher does not fear that the good reader will read only inferior literature. His fear is for the child who has not the skills (cf. also 2.1.1) for he may be limited to the inferior literature which often pass as remedial readers (cf. also 2.3.3.3.5) (Melcher, 1973: 3117).

After having kept records of withdrawals over a 6 year period, Chambers concludes that if children feel totally familiar with the books on the shelves they will begin to use only those they have read and be even more reluctant to read the titles previously discarded (Chambers, 1969: 114). As a remedy he suggests that the fiction stock should be changed once every 3 months and that the children should be aware that this has been done. A means of achieving an altered book stock could be by exchanging books with other school libraries. An additional bonus of such a scheme is

the benefit to be derived from selection by more than 1 person being presented to the children (Chambers, 1969: 122).

The use of display cabinets in the school library containing collections of stamps or coins belonging to pupils has been suggested. The library would then be able to borrow objects from other institutions such as museums. Such displays could provide an added dimension of interest to the library and would involve pupils who would otherwise avoid visiting it (Cleary, 1972: 128).

The methods whereby the library attempts to attract children are many and it is important that time and effort are expended on them so that pupils will come to the library voluntarily and not only at scheduled times.

3.3.2.1.7 Pupil involvement: In order to emphasize how important she considers reading to be, Lilian Batchelor quotes from Robert Frost's writings, in which the object of going to school is considered to lead the child to the permanent realization that books and reading are inseparable from and necessary for every facet of living (Batchelor, 1961: 322). Many writers consider that there is no better way to achieve this than to involve pupils in the activities of the library Allowing pupils to suggest titles is one way of making them feel they are a part of the library (Hagar, 1951: 667). Ideally, books should be displayed as a means of facilitating an informed selection by the pupils. A panel of pupils

can canvass the class for suggestions so that the library may provide books which are wanted by the pupils (Chambers, 1973: 90).

Pupil librarians tend to borrow more books than their peers and as a result encourage others to read (James, 1978: 119). It is therefore important to encourage participation in the library activities. As an incentive the pupil librarians should be allowed to participate in book selection (Chambers, 1973: 91). Samuelson relates that in the school in which he works, being Ladera Elementary School, Menlo Park, California, USA, Library Certificates of Service are awarded to both pupil and parent helpers as a means of encouragement (Samuelson, 1961: 827).

It would seem that the more pupils who are directly involved in the school library, the greater the possibilities are that books and reading will become a habit for most of the pupils of the school.

3.3.2.1.8 **The library extends itself** If the library is to attract voluntary attention, the literature suggests that it must make both pupils and staff aware of its existence.

This would seem necessary if it is true that school libraries are no longer purely custodians of books, but should be the instrument used to create a school of readers, who irrespective of their needs and capability will read with enjoyment and study profitably, thus fulfilling the long term aims of education (Lawson, 1953: 62).

In order to fulfil its function the library should advertise in other school areas. The primary school library can create and supervise classroom libraries, especially in the kindergarten standards. Last, but not least, to consider is the relationship of the librarian, both of the primary and the secondary school, vis a vis his colleagues.

It is suggested by Chambers that "Putting books on show is a way of making recommendations by, as it were, remote control" (Chambers, 1973: 69). His reason for wishing to remove the personal influence of the librarian is his assumption that no librarian will be popular with all pupils and the antagonism which they feel towards him may be extended to an antagonistic attitude towards reading and books.

The warning is given by Blishen that book displays are too often beyond the reach of the average child and although they may look attractive, the child is denied the pleasure of handling the books personally. He recommends that exhibits should relate books to life, showing that they are real and useful to all. He considers that the importance of books does not lie in their physical appearance, but rather in the invisible force of their content which is capable of effecting change in the mind, being both able to delight and disturb the reader (Blishen, 1968: 23).

In order to attract children to the school library lists and displays concerning its books may be placed in the classrooms drawing attention to what is available (Chambers,

1973: 35).

A form of advertising the library is to create a selection of taped book reviews by the pupils. These reviews of books available in the library together with incidental music, can be fed through a school's loud-speaker system. The idea has been attempted and has proved a success, reviews flooded in and there was a significant increase in book borrowing and reading (Earl, 1960: 58).

Nevertheless James cautions the librarian that no single advertising event, no matter how imaginative, can be the answer to the problem of the prevention of reluctant readers. A program of sustained encouragement, is generally the most effective (James, 1978: 122).

There is a consensus of opinion in the literature surveyed that within the primary school, a classroom library as a supplement to the central school library is an asset. Generally speaking:

> "In schools in which class libraries are found, the school is built around the school library, if not architecturally at least in educational philosophy. The school library becomes, as it should, the centre of the school" (Anderson, 1940: 263-4).

It is considered that the proximity of reading material greatly influences its use, and therefore the establishment of classroom libraries should, as a matter of course, positively affect attitudes towards reading (Chambers, 1973: 35; Jacobs, 1956: 23; James, 1978: 120). Such libraries are usually not large and the books in them are mainly related to courses being studied. The books are changed at

intervals, supplies emanating from a central source (Anderson, 1940: 263). The classroom library books should not be confined to titles needed for study (in which event access to them will be restricted to certain times of the day), but should also contain books for leisure reading through which the children can browse when they have completed their formal work (Huck, 1956: 27). The classroom library is the nearest approximation possible to the home library. It is here that books are constantly at hand to be enjoyed without much overt control, building up habits that hopefully, will stretch beyond the confines of the school walls (Chambers, 1969: 127).

It is also hoped that these classroom libraries will make children accustomed to the concept of library use, and will draw their attention to the existence and use of the main school library.

Libraries need not be confined to the classroom, but may also be created in the staffroom where a small collection of both children's and adult literature can be made available (Chambers,1973: 35). It is desirable that the adult books include not only teaching aids but novels and bestsellers, thus encouraging the staff to read in their leisure hours. It is hoped that as a result of such encouragement pupils may see their teachers enjoying the experience of reading (Cohen, 1976: 714). The borrowing of books by the teachers, both in the staff and main library should be made as easy as possible so that the fullest use of the facilities will be

achieved (Cleary, 1972: 92).

The school librarian needs to be adept at public relations in respect of both pupils and teachers and sometimes even parents. If the staff is to develop a positive attitude towards both him and reading he must endeavour to gain their attention and goodwill. This can be achieved by keeping the teaching staff informed of the material available in the library by means of a bulletin board on which book jackets may be pinned (Shubert, 1962: 163). A tour of the library or an informal tea in order to acquaint new teachers with the library's resources and to illustrate the manner in which the librarian can be of service to them, is desirable (Cleary, 1972: 91). It is hoped that they will come to value the services and knowledge of the librarian and accept him as a colleague worthy of being consulted on all educational matters. Unless the librarian can achieve such a state of affairs it will be difficult for him to operate successfully, as he will tend to be working in a vacuum if no cognizance is taken of stock availability when organizing the curriculum (Cleary, 1972: 92).

In order to familiarize teachers with the library it is desirable that staff meetings be held occasionally in the library and that a weekly information sheet of new acquisitions be published. The establishment of a collection of professional books and magazines is another service of value which can be undertaken by the school librarian (Cleary, 1972: 92).

It would seem that the school librarian is much more than a purveyor of books. He needs also to be a public relations man and a psychologist. According to Hall, he must be primarily concerned with assessing the developmental needs of his reader so as to provide him with the opportunities to grow up realizing his full potential, irrespective of unfortunate beginnings (Hall, 1960: 114-6). In a letter written a few months later Boniwell disagrees with this opinion, deeming it of greater necessity to be as conversant as possible with children's books and to have the capacity to introduce them as stimulating, living realities (Boniwell, 1960: 211). Despite such differences of opinion there is a general consensus in the literature that well-trained librarians with a knowledge of books and a rapport with people, especially children, will greatly influence the decrease in the incidence of reluctant reading.

The school library and the school librarian have a fundamental educational role which cannot be achieved unless the resources of the library and the pupils and staff can be brought together, not only formally, but also on a voluntary basis.

3.3.2.2 <u>The teacher's role, attitude and knowledge</u>: (cf. also 2.3.1.3.2) The negative aspects of the teacher's influence have already been discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. also 2.3.1.3 and 2.3.1.4). His importance in the primary school child's life should be obvious when it is remembered how

many of the child's waking hours are spent in his company. If he is to play a positive role in shaping the child's attitude towards books and reading, it is necessary to have a first hand knowledge of the interesting books suitable for the pupils he instructs (Anderson, 1940: 256).

A knowledge of children's literature and a love of reading are not sufficient. Empathy between teacher and pupils is required to prevent the introduction of new books at a time when the mood of the class is not receptive. It is preferable to read when the class is rested and quiet rather than to read according to a schedule. Informal discussions in which the child's reaction to a book may be ascertained or his interest explored, can assist in furthering his personal relationship with individual children. If the discussions take place on a one-to-one basis they will possibly afford opportunities to suggest books on a casual, conversational basis (Chambers, 1973: 40, 68).

Teachers who wish to facilitate firmly established reading habits among their pupils are admonished

a) to become familiar with the material in the school library;

b) to explore it and the librarians knowledge to the full;

c) to arrange library time for their pupils;

d) to show an interest in the leisure reading of their pupils; and

e) to avoid prescribing required reading as far as possible (Cleary, 1972: 93-4).

Teachers are reminded that their objective is not merely to train children in the development of their reading skills, but also to instil the desire and wish to read among them. Teachers are advised

a) to develop a variety of reading interests;

b) to encourage children to react to reading by such methods as dramatization, i.e. acting out the plot of the story (cf. also 3.3.3.4.3);

c) to help children to see the use of reading; and

d) to find joy in it (Huck, 1956: 26-9); and

e) to demonstrate to their pupils their own love of reading and respect for its value teachers should, whenever possible, avoid allowing reading sessions to be interrupted (Polette & Hamlin, 1975: 9).

It is pointed out by Chambers that for any method to inspire children to read to succeed, it is necessary that the teacher be seen reading for enjoyment and be heard talking about this enjoyment, thus demonstrating that books play an important part in his own life. Success is not so much the imparting of technical skills, but rather of the spiritual inspiration (Chambers, 1977(a): 572).

Pupils, suggests Burton, should be encouraged to write book reports in which their personal reactions and interpretations of the book can be expressed. There is little value in reviews which are merely abridged versions of the plot. Burton is opposed to such accepted practices as the formal testing of a child's factual memory of book content. If the

child is continuously interrupted for correction of errors, or for the purpose of having an obvious moral pointed out to him, the thread of the plot and the beauty of the language will tend to be lost and he will be denied a natural discovery of literature. The virtue of free discussion, in Burton's view, lies in its potential for revealing the deficiencies of a book without formal analysis. Amplifying Huck's dictum, i.e. that the child should be taught to react to literature, he recommends a program consisting of guessing games or a group pantomime of some incident occurring in the book (Burton, 1956: 373-81).

Not only should teachers prepare themselves according to the above recommendations if they are to succeed in imbuing their pupils with a love of reading, but they must also be prepared, when undertaking investigations into pupils' needs, to accept criticism and to deal honestly with all information emerging from such investigations. Without the teaching staff's full co-operation, information so gleaned can be of little value and will not result in improvement or alteration of existing school programs (Cleary, 1972: 80).

Having outlined the basis of the teacher's role, attitude and knowledge, it would seem of value to examine a little more closely such aspects as the teacher's knowledge of children's literature, his understanding of the literary backgrounds of his pupils, the different stages of their reading and their various cultural patterns.

His ability to read aloud and its influence on his pupils

are also examined, so too his use of silent reading and the project method. The teacher's influence can be far-reaching. It is he who may be the organizer of visits to the public library and of field trips which help to broaden the interests of his pupils, hopefully stimulating them to read books on subjects that they had previously ignored.

3.3.2.2.1 Children' literature: Writing in Britain, Chambers states that there is a direct relationship between the teacher's literary knowledge (both of adult and children's books) and his success in encouraging his pupils to read. Almost invariably a high percentage of pupils will become interested in reading if the teacher is an avid reader himself (Chambers, 1969: 117).

Many teachers apparently read little, giving as their reason, among others, a lack of time caused by committee meetings or excessive marking of pupils' work. Cleary observes that the implication of this is serious in the light of a study undertaken by El Hagrasy in the USA into the effect of the teacher's role on the success of school library services (Cleary, 1972: 15-6).

In his study El Hagrasy concluded that there is a significant statistical relationship between the teacher's reading habits and his use of library resources and the interest in reading and the literary skills of his pupils (Cleary, 1972: 16).

It would seem that there is general agreement, validated by

research, that there is a tendency for adults, in general, and teachers in particular, to read few books of quality. Accordingly their pupils, although taught the skill of reading, are rarely made aware of the joy which the acquisition of that skill can bring.

3.3.2.2.2 <u>The child's literary background</u> (cf. also 2.2.6)
It is suggested by Chambers that it is of great importance for the teacher to make himself conversant with the child's literary background. If the child comes from a book-conscious home, this task should present no difficulties, but if not, it may prove to be no easy task. Teachers should inquire as to what exactly is read in the homes of their pupils and they should become familiar with such reading material, be it comics, magazines or newspapers. It should then be possible to discuss the reading matter of their pupils' from a position of knowledge and to build up a feeling of mutual trust as a means of enabling the teacher to lead the child along a path which will expose him to a world of literature previously unknown to him. A further advantage to emanate from a favourable teacher-pupil interaction is that it will probably blur the division between home and school (cf. also 2.3.1.1) and help to ease the tensions which tend to be associated with such a situation (Chambers, 1973: 20).
He considers it necessary for teachers to examine their own reading habits and to try striking a balance between the

books read in class with those the pupils read outside the school environment. He believes that

> "...what matters is not that children should read only those books adults have decided will be "good for them", but that adults and children together should share all that children can read, do read and should read, looking for the "good" in it - not only the moral "good" or the didactic "good" but the "good" that is entertaining and revealing, re-creative, re-enactive, and engaging" (Chambers, 1973: 24).

It would seem that if teachers can be taught to love reading they will tend to develop this love in their pupils unconsciously. If this love is coupled with respect for the child's values, this process will probably be achieved more readily and will be more firmly established, hopefully for the rest of the child's life.

3.3.2.2.3 **Different stages of children's reading**: Teachers are admonished to be aware of the fact that not all children, including those grouped in the same class, are at the same stage of reading development, despite their ages varying only slightly within a 12-month span (Falk, 1947: 23). It is suggested that as much time must be given to listening to each child's reading and comprehension on a one-to-one basis, as is given to listening to the class as a whole (Chambers, 1973: 27).

This should be supported by a bookstock which varies greatly in both interest and difficulty (Chambers, 1973: 27).

Likewise, children differ in their reading requirements according to their moods and circumstances. Often an emo-

tional crisis may cause a child to regress temporarily in his literary tastes, reading books which gave him security at an earlier age (Chambers, 1973: 27-8).

Whatever the reason is that causes children to differ in their reading development and tastes, the teacher needs to deal with them gently and give them much encouragement.

3.3.2.2.4 **Understanding of cultural patterns**: (cf. also 2.3.1.1) If children are to relate to books it is necessary for them to find some kind of personal identification with the book's characters or to at least be conversant with the situations in which the characters find themselves. Later, when a love for reading has been established, it is possible for the child to explore the unknown and to broaden his horizons by reading about that which is strange and different to his own environment. It is best, in the beginning, to confine the strangeness to the act of acquiring the skill and joy of reading, avoiding the introduction of the child to material which is irrelevant to his life.

An example of limiting the child's introduction to books to that with which he is conversant is a description by Cleary of a first visit to the school library by a group of children whose homes are on farms. The school librarian provided a display of books related to farming activities and read one of these books to the class. Later other fields of interest would be explored but initially the books introduced were on subjects with which the children were intimately

involved. The librarian had applied her knowledge of the community to provide a meaningful educational experience for these children (Cleary, 1972: 28).

A teacher's and librarian's understanding of cultural patterns, i.e. both their own and that of their pupils is a necessary part of their professional equipment. It should aid them in helping to remove many of the frustrations attached to the school experience. If understanding of the patterns can develop a feeling of trust and regard on the part of the pupils it will probably provide them with an excellent motivation for learning. The recognition of the influence of cultural patterns on the interests of the pupils and on their attitudes towards reading will enable educators to provide books which will be of interest to their pupils and will be within the limits of their reading abilities (Cleary, 1972: 29).

It would appear that if the correct course is taken and the child's environment adequately understood, it will not be difficult to introduce the child to reading even if this activity is not common to his day-to-day experience.

3.3.2.2.5 <u>Oral reading</u>: (cf. also 2.2.5, 2.2.6 and 3.2.6) Teachers, no less than parents, can help to establish a love of literature through reading aloud to their pupils. Many of these pupils may not have had parents who had read aloud to them and may therefore never have heard the beauty of words pronounced correctly and spoken with proper inflection and

understanding. Even those who are used to being read to seldom tire of the enchantment of a tale well told, i.e. of words put together in a novel manner so as to form a story. Reading aloud normally sets a special mood in the classroom and, if the teacher reads well, will state his love for the words and their meaning unobtrusively; perhaps inspiring his listeners to seek for themselves the wonder which can be found in books.

Reading aloud a book of high interest and low vocabulary at the first class meeting may greatly influence both the teacher-pupil relationship and the pupil's attitude to reading. A chapter read from a book can stimulate children to read the rest of the book and may also cause those who find the thought of reading a complete book to be a frightening prospect, to at least attempt reading a chapter in a book. The essence of the lessons is that reading is for enjoyment. Many underachievers (i.e. those whose academic achievements are significantly lower than their intelligence quotient), volunteer to read aloud and, if given preparation periods may be inspired to read for themselves if their oral reading proves successful (Marks, 1962: 151). Children unused to books may regard reading as an onerous task, but a read-aloud experience in the library may well stimulate such children to read because they begin to perceive that it is not nearly as difficult to do as they originally imagined (Lowrie, 1962: 113).

The importance of hearing the teacher read books aloud was

revealed by research undertaken in Britain in 1955 by J.D. Carsley. He found that the children's preference was to hear their teachers read, then to read silently and lastly to hear other children read aloud, thus indicating a prediliction for oral reading (Carsley, 1957: 15-6).

Research by Wightman (1915) revealed that children tend to prefer to read the book about which the teacher is enthusiastic. Some years later Cappa (1953) found that kindergarten children liked the books the teacher read to them most often and were stimulated to look at the book and hear it read again. These findings seem to confirm the importance of reading aloud by teachers.

The mere act of reading aloud is not sufficient however. The environment in which the reading is to take place warrants equal attention. The space needed for the reading, the formality of the session, the amount of light in the room, the temperature, the acoustics, the time of day, the possibilities of interruption and the physical state of both books and venue all play their part in the receptiveness of the pupil to oral reading and therefore should be considered. Receptiveness is conditioned, not only by the physical ambience but also by emotion-laden factors, such as forthcoming events, e.g. examinations, holidays, peer and adult attitudes and the pupil's sense of anticipation in regard to the session (Chambers, 1973: 40-1, 85-9).

Communication by means of human sounds goes back as far as man himself. This developed into an oral tradition whereby

tales, factual and mythological, generally concerned with the history of the group, were passed from generation to generation, sometimes from father to son or by the elders of the community, but more often by professional storytellers. These storytellers were either attached to the court of a patron or wandered from place to place spinning the web of enchantment wherever there were people who would stop and listen.

Modern man is not so different from his ancestors in that he cannot resist either telling or listening to stories, however trivial they may be. In the 1970s enormous attention has been paid to the concept of meaningful communication. This is probably due to the fact that much personal communication has been replaced by the media, resulting in the human element being ousted to a large extent by technology. Literature grew out of this oral tradition and there would seem to be no better method of introducing children to it, than through the means of oral communication, i.e. the telling and reading of stories aloud to them (Chambers, 1973: 43).

Oral reading is especially important at the stage when the child's skill is still limited, thus precluding him from reading books which are of potential interest to him. Even after the skills have developed, the child may be completely unaware of the literature available without the stimulus of oral reading (Chambers, 1973: 43).

Another reason for the encouragement of oral reading is that

it tends to familiarize children with the sounds of written language so that they can become able to hear words in print in their inner ear. It is asserted that

> "...most ...people read too much, too bittily and too quickly; they have no gears in their reading. Many of them make a thin response because they give little body - in terms of tone, manner, emotion, and so on - to their eye-reading; their inner ear is almost dead. They need to hear literature read well, and to practise reading it aloud ..." (Hoggart, 1970: 220).

If Hoggart's assertions are valid, the child who has only contact with literature through the printed word and whose oral world is limited, perhaps by hearing only a dialect (except through the media), an unimaginative vocabulary and communication which is strictly utilitarian, will find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to appreciate and enjoy what he is reading. The sound of the words that he read will be alien to him and he will be like a deaf man watching an orchestra perform but unable to hear the music. It is therefore necessary for him to hear books well read and not to be expected to read only to himself or never to hear books being read aloud except by his peers as they struggle to learn the skills of reading.

If the reading aloud is an important part of a teacher's function, attention should be paid to the quality of his voice. An irritating, unpleasant voice on the part of the teacher can be disconcerting, but it is possible to train almost all voices. Therefore it is possible for teachers to learn to read in a reasonably pleasant manner, without

attempting to emulate the quality of actors' voices. Chambers considers that voice control should be part of a teacher's training because it is one of his tools-in-trade. He should listen to his own voice on a tape recorder so as to hear the effect it will have on others. Breathing control and articulation can also be practised (Chambers, 1973: 44-5).

Reading aloud in the classroom is not confined to the teacher, as in the case of the class reader, which is a book that is read aloud to the class either by the teacher or by the pupils themselves. Each pupil has his own copy in which he follows the story while it is read. The reading is usually followed by some type of discussion about what has been read.

It has been discovered, on investigating the use of the class reader, that the shared experience of reading a book together is of great value to both teachers and their pupils. When interviewed, the teachers said that they regarded the experience of reading the class reader as educationally worthwhile. It resulted in a community spirit which emanated from a sense of shared pleasure quite different from the pleasure achieved from individual reading (Calthrop, 1971: 2-3).

They compared it to the experience of a theatre audience. It was not felt that if the book was not fully understood by all that this was of paramount importance. They justified this opinion by alluding to the enjoyment of the young child

in a family who cannot read but holds the book for the reader.

The discussion which usually evolves from such reading sessions prompts the reticent child to join in, while the bright and enthusiastic child can give something to the struggler (Calthrop, 1971: 2-3).

Books which are to be used in reading schemes should not be used for other teaching. It is suggested that these activities should be completed before these books are approached so that the children's response to them should not be part of a negative struggle (Wigglesworth, 1975: 198).

3.3.2.2.6 Silent reading: Having explored the value of oral reading, it is necessary to remember that silent reading also has its place in the child's acquiring a love of reading. Ideally, silent reading should be a continuation of browsing. Hence, having selected a book the child is given school time in which to enjoy it. John Werner summarizes the reason why this type of reading is important. His points are that it (a) allows each child to read at his own speed; (b) gives opportunities for trial and error in the satisfaction of emotional and intellectual needs; (c) provides opportunities to read for the many who have no leisure time for reading outside of school hours; (d) removes possible emotional blocks to reading caused by dislike of past or present teachers; (e) ensures that book selection will become a participation event for the child, instead of reflecting

solely the choice of the teacher; (f) provides opportunities for a wide and varied diet of reading; and (g) helps the child to acquire skills in literary discrimination (Werner, 1970: 162).

It is suggested that a brief discussion about books, creating a suitably restful environment, precedes the period of silent reading. In the kindergarten classes the period of silent reading should be broken up into segments relieving the strain on the child's attention span. In the primary classes an entire period can be devoted to silent reading. It is, however, essential to establish that these sessions be uninterrupted. It is for the teacher to ensure that both browsing and silent reading are provided for within school, thereby, hopefully, diminishing or surmounting antagonism to reading (Chambers, 1973: 97-9).

3.3.2.2.7 **Project system**: (cf. also 2.3.1.4) The project system which has been discussed previously has both advantages and disadvantages. It is a system which entails the use of many books other than textbooks by the child resulting in a great increase in book use. For this method to be used successfully books need to be examined and graded first by the teacher, because, if children find that they cannot read whole passages from books recommended for project work, they are likely to become discouraged and to blame the activity rather than the text. If a child with a reading problem should be assisted in finding library books which he

is able to read he may well be encouraged to read more, especially if these books resemble those read by his peers in format (Ralph, 1950: 53, 55).

It is suggested that the children involved in project work should be taught the correct approach to the work so that increased book use is strenghthened by a knowledge of the skills which combine to encourage the correct usage of these books (Ralph, 1950: 57).

It appears evident that the project system relies not only on the availability of suitable material but also on the teacher's ability to introduce the material to his pupils. If correctly handled this may well prove an important tool in reducing the incidence of reluctant reading.

3.3.2.2.8 **Public library visits**: Regular library visits should be arranged by teachers as a means of familiarizing children with the arrangement and organization of the public library. If time has been allocated to browsing in the public library throughout the child's life at school, the borrowing of books there will probably become a habit. It has been found that after a visit to the library (public or school) for project work, children usually return to borrow titles unrelated to their school work (James, 1978: 118).

It is believed by G.A. Carter that most children would read if a convenient library was available, especially if the collection of books was large. He found, while doing research among a group of 109 boys and girls between the ages

of 12 and 14 in Warrington, England, that these children requested more libraries and longer library hours (Carter, 1947: 220).

It would therefore seem that research supports the view that school libraries should organize visits to larger public libraries which are open for browsing when school libraries are closed, viz. late afternoons, evenings,week-ends and school holidays. The children would then become aware of the existence of the public library and come to appreciate its resources. When children leave school they will, it is hoped, as a result of using the public library during their school years, naturally gravitate towards it to fulfil their literary needs, thus reducing the incidence of adult reluctant reading.

3.3.2.2.9 **Field trips**: Teachers should not restrict their out-of-school excursions to the public library but should also include field trips, i.e. a visit to a place with the intention of studying it, not through books but through observation. It has been found that it forms a break in the usual school routine and tends to motivate reading. A museum or a local newspaper are ideal places to visit. The latter would probably encourage the children to read that which was printed in their presence. They may well discover that there are sections which will interest them on a permanent basis. The children may later be asked to write a report on these visits and the checking of facts may include the use of

books in the library (Marks, 1962: 153).

3.3.2.3 The principal's role: (cf. also 2.3.1.5) A principal should be the central core of his school. Unless he demonstrates a positive approach to the encouragement of reading, both on a practical and a spiritual level, there is little likelihood that any progressive program to diminish the incidence of reader reluctance, developed by either the librarian or the teaching staff, or both, will meet with any permanent success.

A 6 point program is recommended for principals eager to prevent the development of reading reluctance. Principals can (a) stimulate the purchase of well-chosen books, preferably in consultation with an acknowledged expert on children's literature; (b) make special efforts towards the establishment of a school library with a qualified librarian at the helm where such facilities do not yet exist; (c) encourage his staff to co-operate with the library once it has been established; (d) provide space for the conspicuous display of books related to important calendar events and stimulate discussion programs related to books; (e) avail himself of the opportunity to discuss current events with his pupils, directing their attention to books on the subject; and (f) become involved in advertising books of importance (Anderson, 1940: 257).

Further ways in which the principal can make a significant contribution towards prevention and cure of reluctant

readers include the following activities: (a) he can organize group discussions on problems related to the school reading program; (b) he can demand written and oral reports from the librarian on the resources of the library in order to investigate its possible improvement; (c) he can be make representations to the educational authorities to ensure that the school library is adequately financed and staffed in accordance with educational standards of service; and (d) he can also make himself conversant with other types of school systems and attempt to discover if they have anything to offer which would improve his own (Cleary, 1972: 95).

It is the principal who should be aware of the educational strength of his staff, directing their material and methodology, within their capacities and encouraging the improvement of their educational and instructional competency. It is he who is primarily responsible for creating a climate of reading at his school (Bone, 1964: 77).

The success or otherwise of such methods of teaching as the project system (cf. also 2.3.1.4 and 3.3.2.2.7) is, according to Florence Cleary, very much dependent upon him. It is his active approval and participation which enables them to survive (Cleary, 1972: 95).

Thus it appears that the literature regards the role of the principal as being central to the success of any of the ideas put forward in this survey for use in schools. The suggestions contained in this section are all very practical, and although these points are only made in American

sources, they are on the whole universally applicable.

3.3.2.3.1 **Rev. Randall's radical step**: A practical application of some of the above principles was initiated by an eccentric principal, the Rev. Randall, head of a very good boys' school in England, who had 50 new toilets built, all separate and well lit. In each toilet he put 2 shelves. On the top shelf he placed a variety of books and markers. A boy could read a book, mark it and place it on the second shelf until he had finished with it. The books on the top shelf were frequently changed. The boys' natural curiosity and time spent with nothing better to do stimulated a desire to read which in turn fostered a habit.

Four conclusions are drawn from this experiment, viz. (a) it seems that if books are easily available and placed where they will tempt examination and browsing they will be used; (b) another prerequisite for reading is that it is essential that these books be judiciously selected; (c) freedom from distraction seems also to be of importance; and (d) attitude is of paramount importance, because in this experiment books had become the norm, rather than objects of peculiarity and they were discussed alongside such subjects as cricket (Patrick, 1957: 448)

3.3.2.4 **School bookshops**: (cf. also 3.2.1 and 4.3.1.2) School bookshops, manned by the school librarian, parents or even older pupils, stocked at the advice of the librarian

and being situated on the school premises, can play an important role in the prevention of reader reluctance. Several writers in the literature surveyed give their reasons for favouring such an arrangement, their dubiousness about its commercial overtones within the school walls notwithstanding, and suggest the most effective manner of running such bookshops. David Taylor, a librarian in Bedford, England, is of the opinion that once an interest in books has been aroused, children as a rule want to own them. As it is often difficult for pupils to visit commercial bookshops, a school bookshop is a very useful amenity (Libraries and the educational process, 1977: 229).

Another reason for the desirability of establishing a school bookshop is that it makes an excellent place "...where teachers, parents and children can meet informally and buy, borrow, and discuss books ..." (Chambers, 1973: 20). Chambers suggests ground rules for running such a shop, whether an agency for a bookseller or a fully fledged licensed shop. He recommends that (a) the responsibility for it should rest with more than 1 person; (b) the precise nature of the relationship between bookseller and school should be determined at the outset; (c) children should participate in stock selection; (d) most of the books should be in paperback; (e) precautions should be taken to avoid theft; and (f) publicity is essential both to publicize the existence of the bookshop and to prevent the initial interest from flagging (Chambers, 1973: 102-4).

There would appear to be no legal problems attached to a school running a commercial enterprise within its walls apart from advising that the terms of the enterprise should be settled at the outset.

Another idea is that of having a mobile bookstore, which is paid for and stocked by a local bookseller. From the literature this appears to have been successful in the USA. A school bookshop is considered to benefit all parties concerned, because the purchase of a book is a reader commitment as well as a step towards survival on the part of the book publisher:

> "One book purchased from a mobile bookstore by one reluctant reader represents a significant double accomplishment for education and industry alike" (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 47).

3.3.2.5 <u>Secondary school courses on parenthood</u>: Although it is not uncommon for school leavers to be given courses on raising a family, little is done about teaching "the linguistic and literary development of infants" (Chambers, 1973: 21). It is recommended that attention be given to the latter function, which should include the teaching of the art of reading aloud and storytelling. It is emphasized though, that such a course should not only be theoretical but also practical. The pupils should be afforded the opportunity of reading aloud to younger children (Chambers, 1973: 21-2).

The importance of early storytelling, and the disabilities caused by linguistic and literary deficiencies arising from its absence in the education of the child have been dis-

cussed repeatedly throughout this and the last chapters. Even if those participating in a storytelling course never become parents, the knowledge so gained is seen to be invaluable in the persuit of most careers eventually to be chosen by the pupils concerned. Having developed the ability to lay the foundation stones in the campaign against the causes of reading reluctance, it will be the privilege and responsibility of such pupils to take the initiative in the future.

3.3.2.6 **Encouraging parental involvement in the school**: (cf. also 2.3.1.1) Since many parents have the desire but not the knowledge to help their children the idea of encouraging parental involvement in the school can only be of benefit to the pupils. The lack of knowledge may be due to educational limitations, but may also be due to a lack of knowledge of children's needs and of how best they can be fulfilled. As it is implied in the above section (3.3.2.4 and 3.3.2.5), the role of the school cannot be confined to its own small world, but it must incorporate that which is of value in the general community and should be of use to persons other than its pupils. It is in this way that the school will be enabled to serve its pupils best giving them a 'well-rounded education'.

It is of course impossible to involve every parent, but it can be taken as fact that most parents care about their children's education and will go to great lengths to promote

it if they are shown how to be of assistance. Hence, there is a clear need for schools to educate parents with regard to the requirements of their children. This can be accomplished by such means as book fairs and school book shops, by encouraging parental visits to the school so that they may be made aware of the importance of reading to their children and of the material available for so doing, and by regular discussions pertaining to the child's reading progress. Thus, "a network of opportunities for the kind of interchange that educates the parents as well as their children can be woven into the fabric of the school's daily life" (Chambers, 1973: 20).

The methods described in the preceding paragraph will, by and large, also help to break down the artificial barriers between school and home life, giving teachers and librarians an insight into the child's background and parents a more realistic perception of the world in which their children spend a very large part of their daily lives (Chambers, 1973: 21)

3.3.3 **THE PUBLIC LIBRARY** (cf. also 2.3.2)

The public library appears to have certain advantages in the battle to counteract the incidence of reluctant readers, in that it is open when the school library is closed, is often a family experience and gives children a sense of being accepted for what they are at the moment rather than being fitted, as they are at school, into academic, social or

economic categories (Field, 1971: 3446-7).

As argued in section 3.3.2.2.8 children must be trained to use both school and public libraries, so that they will naturally go from one to the other when they leave school. The public library must not concentrate only on those children who are at schools without libraries, disregarding children served by a school library, otherwise the habit of library usage which the school library has established stands the risk of ceasing after school leaving - a trend which will, in all likelihood, result in an adult generation of non-readers (Kingsbury, 1978: 21; Lawson, 1953: 69).

It would therefore appear that no library services designed for adults will achieve their full potential unless their users have been trained within the framework of a good children's service (Kingsbury, 1978: 21). If children are to develop good reading habits as an out-of-school pastime it is necessary for them to feel familiar with the library where they will borrow their books for the rest of their lives, and for this to happen a good public library is needed (Burr, 1946: 118).

Research has indicated the validity of Elizabeth Burr's claim. In the USA, New England has produced eminent people in all walks of life far out of proportion to the size of its population. It has been suggested by Nearing that this may be due to the extensive provision of public library facilities in this State (Nearing, 1916). Moreover, it is observed by Robert Underwood Johnson, that Indiana's great

number of writers and the intelligence of its reading public is probably because of the early establishment of township libraries within its borders (Gladden, 1909: 24). Therefore there would seem to be evidence supporting the contention that the American public library has always played a major role in the prevention of reader reluctance despite the emergence of the school library. It has, however, not been proved that this necessarily implies that lack of public library services will increase the incidence of reader reluctance.

If the library is to be of benefit to the community the establishment thereof is not sufficient. It is also necessary that it attracts and retains reader interest. In order to do this it is desirable that it projects a modern, progressive image so that it will attract readers (especially those who would otherwise not have entered its doors) to make an initial visit. Having lured such reluctant users inside the library should aim to create an atmosphere which will induce them to remain, to examine the material available and hopefully to decide to repeat the visit, preferably on a regular basis (Milam. 1932: 4-5).

Soviet Russia appears to be very much aware that in order to propagate its viewpoint its library must set out to attract readers. In New Delhi, India, the library at the Soviet Embassy supplies children with library cards for which they themselves are responsible. It has children's books in Russian and India's vernacular languages, books which enable

children to study Russian and to acquaint themselves with conditions in Soviet Russia. The Americans also have a library in New Delhi, but, unlike the Russians will only supply library cards to children if accompanied by their parents. However many parents work all day and cannot make the trip. The result is that the children of New Delhi tend to go to the Russian rather than the American library. Soviet Russia is attracting a larger proportion of possible readers because they have assessed the situation accurately and have made a greater effort than the Americans to accommodate the young Indians who will tend to become indoctrinated with the communist rather than with the capitalist philosophy on life, siding with Russia in the struggle for world power (Isaacson, 1981: 34).

There are several factors which influence the popularity of the public library. These include physical environment, the librarian, book stock, projects organized and the community and outreach programs. These factors in turn have several dimensions which the survey will attempt to analyse.

Before proceeding with the literature survey in regard to the public library it would seem pertinent to examine the aims and objectives as drawn up by the Public Library Research Group of the London and Home Counties branch of the Library Association which decided that modern management techniques, which encourage the fulfilment of stated objectives were necessary if public libraries were to take their rightful place in the community.

They state that the aim of a public library is to sustain "the quality of life in all its aspects - educational, economic, industrial, scientific and cultural". Moreover, in order that democracy may remain a political reality the public library must make available the resources necessary to all men so that they may develop into truly civilized beings fully aware both of themselves and their environment. Thus the library has both a cultural and an educational objective. By making available the records of man's experiences they provide the material necessary to stimulate an interchange of information and ideas (Public library aims and objectives, 1971: 233).

They define the 4 basic objectives of public libraries as the promotion of:

1. **Education** - To encourage and provide the resources necessary for self development and to enable man to reach his potential in discovering recorded knowledge.
2. **Information** - To provide people with accurate information quickly and in depth, particularly on current matters.
3. **Culture** - To become cultural centres of importance to the community and to stimulate cultural participation, appreciation and enjoyment.
4. **Leisure** - To provide the resources necessary for the positive use of leisure and to encourage the use thereof (Public library aims and objectives, 1971: 233).

What follows,being that which has been culled from the literature surveyed basically amplifies the aims and objectives.

The document divides the objectives into sub-objectives and principal activities, e.g. in order to promote the use of the library as a cultural centre it is suggested that lectures, story hours, film-shows and concerts can be organized (Public library aims and objectives, 1971: 233-4). This and other matters will be discussed in the rest of the section 3.3.3 and again in section 4.3.2.

3.3.3.1 **Physical environment**: (cf. also 2.3.2.1.2 and 3.3.2.1.4) The public library in the Western world, during the first half of the twentieth century, as stated earlier, tended to be forbidding and old-fashioned. It is necessary for it to update its attitudes, image and environment continuously so that it will be able to compete successfully in the open markets of entertainment where television, cinema and sports are but a few of its competitors. The physical environment of the public library is perhaps even more important than the physical environment of the school library because, whereas the school library has a captive audience, by and large the public library has to attract people to enter and sample its wares. The many successful schemes described, and the wealth of additional suggestions found in the literature are a clear indication of the importance the writers attach to this particular aspect of library service to children.

The Scandinavians, in particular, have shown much concern in connection with library environment. They are aware that the

children's library is as important as the adult library to the welfare of the community. The Danish Library Act states that a library must have both an adult and a children's department, both being free of charge. The children's library should have such facilities as books, puppets, games, clubs, movies, radio and television (Rostrup, 1972: 82).

The ideal is that children's libraries should be stimulating, providing a variety of activities so that it becomes a place children desire to visit and where they wish to remain (Rostrup, 1972: 82).

An example of such an integrated library is the Faltoverstein Public Library in Stockholm. It is a cafe-library, a place where people can eat, drink, read books, periodicals and newspapers and listen to records and tapes. The library has large windows, easy chairs and head-phones. This library also has an outreach program, i.e. initiates projects which are designed to be of service to people who do not visit the library, and makes collections of books available to creches and dentists' waiting rooms (Schrader, 1977: 154-7).

Librarians in Scandinavia realize that in many residential areas the library is the only free entertainment amenity available. Once children come to the library they tend to participate in the activities provided. In this manner, the mode of formality becomes transformed,resulting, inter alia, in a questioning of the conventional idea that book reading is central to public library activity (Towards an "aware" children's library, 1978: 78).

The advent of the audio-visual age has significantly affected the lives of the modern generation of the last decade of the twentieth century. This has caused libraries to abandon the concept that they are solely book-lending institutions and to include the use and availability for borrowing of other materials.

In an attempt to create a pleasurable environment and to demonstrate that book reading need not be confined indoors the public library of Nijmegen in Holland has experimented with the provision of not only a children's room, but also a children's garden where chairs and garden tables with sunshades are made available for child readers. This experiment is reported to have been very successful (De Nijmeegsche..., 1950: 342).

If the library acts as a meeting place where children may bring and exhibit their hobbies, it will possibly acquire interested new clients who initially come there to display their hobbies but remain to read. In Spear's view the children's library should be a museum and a workshop where their latent talents should be encouraged. A child visiting the children's library should be made to feel welcome and important. It is suggested that the library be decorated with a fishtank, vases of flowers (brought by the children) and mobiles (Spear, 1957(a): 622-3; Spear, 1957(b): 135).

The idea is advanced by Dunlop that the library should be seen as an institution in which varied but related activities take place. One such library is reported to have a

small exhibition hall where such objects as posters related to books can be displayed and a cafe where the daily newspapers can be perused. It also contains equipment such as head-phones for listening to fairytales and a "fairy room" with a little stage and brightly coloured scatter cushions. The library is fully carpeted, the children's section having various levels so that children may take off their shoes and clamber - " a reading landscape". To publicize the library, red, white and black thin plastic shopping bags are provided. These bags bear the library's name and opening hours, and as a result the reader assists in advertising the library (Dunlop, 1972: 54-5).

There is a need, states Drickamer, for an improvement in the quality of children's libraries, because this will improve the libraries' image. This is of importance because in many cases the library is the "last stronghold of pleasant yet impersonal relationships" (Drickamer. 1962: 1082). Drickamer claims that children have become reluctant readers, owing to pressures, a feeling of failure or parental or teacher misassessment of their potential achievements. Accordingly, the public library, if viewed in this light, is of unique importance in any attempt to diminish the incidence of reluctant readers (Drickamer, 1962: 1080).

Other authors emphasize the importance of the so-called 'affability factor' which creates a favourable environment for the first, as well as subsequent visits to the library. It is advisable to have direct access to the stock, espe-

cially as this educates children towards self help. They suggest that the reader should always be regarded as a guest and therefore one who should be welcomed accordingly. Curtains to screen off the sun, carpets to deaden noise, plants to humidify the air, bean bags, pillows and chairs and tables for studying will go a long way towards establishing the affability factor (Brice, 1977: 145; Cohen, 1976: 714). Burr, in turn, pleads that rigid controls should be relaxed. She claims that although children enjoy having a special area they do not like being limited to it (Burr, 1959: 832). This could stultify their reading growth and may cause them to regard the adult library as alien territory which may not be explored, even at the point when maturing children can no longer derive satisfaction from the children's section.

Young people reach a stage when they are too old for the children's library but find the atmosphere of the adult library alien to their lifestyle (cf. also 2.1.7). Many libraries provide a section in their adult libraries for housing teenage literature. However, in an age when the average teenager is conscious of estrangement from adult society this may prove pointless. The Swedes, bearing this in mind, established a completely separate section of the library for teenagers (Chambers, 1969: 131-2).

The ideal would seem to be a place where teenagers and books are brought together under the supervision of a librarian who has insight into teenage problems and a sound knowledge of his stock (Chambers, 1969: 132). In a letter to him,

Sheila Ray describes a visit to Sweden, where she saw libraries containing coffee-bars, teenage rooms and even a bookshop. The latter she felt to be an excellent amenity, especially in villages not large enough to make a commercial bookshop a viable proposition (Chambers, 1969: 131).

It is not only in Sweden that the possible need for the abolition of artificial barriers has been recognized. American writers have also paid much attention to the subject.

If children are to be encouraged to read better books, states McColvin, they should not be kept within the confines of the children's library because this limiting of their literary growth tends also to limit the growth of their minds. The abolition of distinctions between class, age, grades and departments is advocated because this will demonstrate to children that they should use the entire library and not confine their reading to books found only in 1 section (McColvin, 1950: 289).

Children are usually ready to explore the world of books when they reach the ages of 11 to 13 and therefore the whole library should be made accessible to them. It should be kept in mind that the child who is indulging in a rash of reading series books or books not of the best quality often accompanies this with the reading of important adult books (Wessells, 1959: 827, 830).

The Rochester Public Library, N.Y.,USA experimented with open access for all teenagers and found this to be a

successful arrangement. It was found that children allowed into the adult library by and large did not read what the library regarded as "unsuitable fiction". Instead they tended to use books for themes and hobbies, while greater use was made of gramaphone records and non-book material (Open access for children..., 1968: 255).

The atmosphere of the library is not dependent solely on material things but is also related to the attitude adopted towards behaviour in the library.

There are some authorities, such as Anne Osborn (cf. also 3.3.3.2), who believe in a completely laissez-faire attitude in regard to behavioural problems in the library. Others, such as Barbara Hopkins, are slightly more cautious in this approach. Although Hopkins agrees with Osborn's view that children should be left to enjoy themselves, each according to his own wishes, she warns that the permissive atmosphere in the children's library must be controlled, otherwise chaos tends to ensue. Hopkins claims, moreover, that such educationalists as E.R Braithwaite and Daniel Fader would support her in this opinion (Hopkins, 1973: 1615-6).

Libraries' tools of trade often seem to be more awesome than necessary. Many children are daunted by catalogues and therefore avoid them. It is necessary to remove these fears through a process of education which can be undertaken at the public libraries, but perhaps even more successfully at the school libraries (Doring, 1977: 317-20).

A successful attempt to eradicate such a sense of awe among

child users was undertaken in a library in Budapest, in which the author catalogue was enlivened by a slashed divider in black and white carrying a photograph and dates of birth and death of each author concerned. Titles in the subject catalogue in turn were highlighted with the aid of coloured illustrated dividers, similar illustrations being used on the shelves (Jackson, 1972: 564-5).

There would clearly seem to be a need for librarians to keep libraries alive with interest for children while supplying useful information, eye appeal, and the delight that often accompanies children's discoveries of books (Jackson, 1972: 565).

It goes without saying that there is little purpose in creating an attractive image for the library if it is only available at times when the vast majority of people are working. One of the reasons for the success of such activities as television, radio, cinema and sports is that they can be enjoyed when people seek entertainment. Although books are not used only for entertainment but also to increase knowledge, if they are to take their rightful place in the lives of the community, they must also be available when they can be best utilized and enjoyed (cf. also 3.3.3). Authors are in agreement that most public libraries, especially in residential areas,should have generous opening hours. A reason over and above those discussed in the previous paragraph is the fact that the library is sometimes the only local institution whose hours suit the population

when they are at leisure (James, 1978: 120; Kylberg, 1974: 103).

It can be seen that authorities are in agreement about the importance of both the physical and the spiritual atmosphere in combating the incidence of reluctant reading.

In the light of the preceding paragraphs it would seem appropriate to become acquainted with the type of use children make of the facilities within, what seems to be considered the ideal type of atmosphere.

Instead of being given books to read by a librarian, parent or peer, many, if given the time, would prefer to browse through books, sampling and deciding on their own about what they would enjoy reading. It is possible for the library to encourage browsing as a means of developing the child's own tastes and decisions, by providing open access to books and comfort in which to look at them. Browsing like reading is a habit which needs to be established by constant practice (Chambers, 1973: 94-7).

Browsing has been found to be the approach most commonly used for acquiring printed informational sources. However, there is no firm evidence that the books so acquired are necessarily the most useful (Greene, 1977: 313, 316).

The making of decisions is part of growth and the choice of a book is one of these decisions. It is recommended therefore that children be allowed to browse unhindered, without constant adult supervision (Cleary, 1972: 148; Hill, 1950: 673).

Even at the primary school level browsing should be supervised as little as possible. The child should be allowed to exercise his independence in choosing a book although some control may be necessary to avoid discouragement which may be caused by continuously selecting books beyond his capacity (Wigglesworth, 1975: 198).

Chairs in quiet corners meant for browsing are appreciated by pupils. They add to the atmosphere of the library and subtly demonstrate that the school considers books to be important in the educational process (Peterson, 1962: 177).

It is Chambers' opinion that the public library will attract users if it subtly encourages the habit of browsing. He considers there to be few pleasures as great, for a reader, as browsing, especially when coming across a book which excites him (Chambers, 1973: 95).

There is a danger that children may be driven away from books if they are recommended by those in authority. These same books may, however, be read if discovered by the children themselves. Too often, although children become enthusiastic about reading, they are not allowed to satisfy their desire to read except with books chosen by their teachers (Chambers, 1973: 95).

The advantages of browsing both in the school and the public library may be summarized as follows:

a) Unless given a library period in which to browse, many children would not become familiar with books because they would never come into contact with large quantities

of books all in one place. Many do not have books at home,

nor do they have the opportunity to visit bookshops or the public library.

b) Browsing offers the opportunity of finding books to match the varying needs and skills of the individuals.

c) Browsing also offers the teacher or librarian the chance of speaking informally to children on an individual basis and of endeavouring to discover their interests and problems.

d) Browsing periods may be used for selecting books for purchase in a school or public library with a bookshop (Chambers, 1973: 94-6).

Cleary makes an additional point to this list when she writes that there is a danger that the school and public library may become regarded solely as a source of information and not as a place of pleasure and discovery. Periods devoted to browsing may help to allay this concept (Cleary, 1972: 166).

In conclusion, it would seem that there is a neeed for browsing and it is therefore the responsibility of libraries to create maximum opportunity for this need.

3.3.3.2 <u>The public library librarian</u>: (cf. also 2.3.2.3) A library is dependent for its success, not only on physical and mental factors but also on a human factor, namely the librarian. Without his sympathetic and knowledgeable

presence it is doubtful that any children's library will succeed in creating or sustaining an interest in reading on the part of the children who visit the library.

Both the public library and the formal school library have a part to play in the life of a child. The opinion has been expressed by those in control of fiscal matters, especially in times of economic crisis, that it would be financially sound to amalgamate the school library and the public library. It is thought that this would avoid a duplication of stock and services and as a result library services would be increased while less money would need to be spent. Librarians working in the field, do not, according to the literature surveyed, seem to be of this opinion.

The need for a school library has been discussed in section 3.3.2.1. A librarian who believes that a school library and a children' room in the public library are a necessity is Doris Gates, who expresses the view that any community without both is deprived of a basic intellectual facility. Although the 2 services may sometimes overlap she feels that they do not compete. It is at school that reading programs can stimulate a demand for books which in turn is carried over to the public library. Without acquiring the habit of borrowing from the public library it is doubtful whether the interest in book reading acquired at school will continue into adult life (Gates, 1956: 163-4).

The function of the 2 libraries are different. The public library caters for voluntary users, and therefore may spend

more money on books that will appeal to the more advanced reader than can the school library. The latter needs to cater for a far wider range of reading abilities and for specific curricular requirements (Gates, 1956: 164). A combining of budgets could overcome this problem, but the constant liaison needed between teachers and public librarians to facilitate the provision of books suitable for projects is difficult to achieve. Moreover, it is not usually possible for children to visit the library, undertake research and return to school within the space of a single period.

The public library is open during weekends and holidays when the school library even, if more accessible is closed. Gates also mentions that whereas many pupils associate the school library with reading for a purpose, the children's room of the public library is normally only associated with pleasure (Gates, 1956: 165).

Another librarian, Mary E. Kingsbury, is also of the opinion that the 2 library services dovetail and that the public library comes into its own when the school library is closed (Kingsbury, 1978: 21). Many of the schemes mentioned in this thesis are orientated towards parents, together or separately from their children, and these tend best to be incorporated within the framework of a public library.

Not only do the functions of the school library and the public library differ, but so too do the functions of the librarians who work in the respective types of library. Although both libraries endeavour to bring children and

books together, the approach of the school librarian is that of a teacher, whereas that of the public librarian is that of a guide and a storyteller. The time spent by the school librarian in preparing and giving lessons on library use can be spent by the public librarian on preparing and telling stories (Gates, 1956: 165).

The public librarian deals with a much larger group of children (though usually seeing them less often) and having, on the whole, only a cursory if any knowledge of the social, economic and academic background of these children (Gates, 1956: 166). He is primarily a librarian as opposed to the school librarian, who must combine with his library training a knowledge of teaching either by experience or by professional training. The school librarian is often the only professional librarian on the staff of the school and therefore may find it more difficult than the public librarian to express his needs to his administrators. The school librarian is in a unique position and therefore should attempt to see that his relationship with the teachers is such that he is included in curriculum planning playing a positive role in its design and development (Kinsella, 1977: 252; Rice, 1978: 618-9).

The attitude of the librarian, whether school or public, when dealing with children is an important factor in the overall effectiveness of the library service. This is particularly true in the case of the public librarian whose users come to the library on a voluntary basis. If he is severe,

censorious and has no empathy with children, the atmosphere of his library will not be conducive to attracting readers and, despite the money which may have been spent on modernizing the library and creating a children's department attuned to the needs of the young, reluctant readers will still abound. It is he who injects life into the children's library.

The librarian is as much responsible for creating a pleasant library atmosphere which will attract readers as he is responsible for helping those who seek advice and for ensuring that the materials needed are purchased and processed. A tolerant rather than critical attitude to such matters as dress, should encourage a rapport between him and his patrons. Librarians should be initiators in such matters as the organization of such games as chess and scrabble (Osborn, 1973: 975). Also it is they who can stimulate reader interest by issuing such challenges as "I wonder what you will make of this? A little grown-up perhaps" (Blishen, 1968: 29).

Thus it is the librarian, by his attitude and personality, who creates a viable library service. The ideal librarian knows, writes Spear, that "children are to love, books are to read, and children librarians are to bring the two together" (Spear, 1957(b): 135).

Current economic stringencies seem likely to result in the increased use of paperbacks and a disintegration of the old order which approved only of hardcover books for library

use. Likewise libraries may become more makeshift, the buildings less prestigious and impressive, but probably more colourful and inviting (cf. also 3.3.3). If this occurs, librarians will have to be more flexible in their attitudes (Totterdell, 1976: 150).

Forsman compares libraries to crisis centres. People working at these centres do not advise, but serve a greater purpose than merely being listeners. A possible constructive attitude to a problem is provided, aiding the caller to examine the problem thoroughly. It is hoped that the crisis will be alleviated and that the caller will have learned to deal with future ones by himself. Librarians, on the other hand, tend to expect people to ask advice, hoping that satisfaction will encourage them to return for more information. Forsman suggests that it would be useful if librarians took a leaf out of the crisis centre's book and explain how they obtain the information required. This would enable readers to derive satisfaction from self-help and would give the librarian more time to spend with those who really need his advice (Forsman, 1972: 1132).

Librarians should encourage people to utilize the resources of the library by a system of self-help. This they can do by providing resources, i.e. materials, buildings and trained personnel, by motivating and equipping readers to avail themselves of these resources and by providing guidance in selecting materials best adapted to their needs (Bryan, 1939: 8). Constant reading, states Wessells, is a necessity

for the librarian to have sufficient knowledge to enable him to operate in a professional and efficient manner as described above (Wessells, 1959: 830).

It has been suggested by Dervin that librarians evaluate user satisfaction in terms of such criteria as

a) Did the user learn, come to understand, or find out something as a result of a library activity?

b) Did the library resources serve as an impetus that satisfied that need?

c) Did those readers who were seeking it find companionship and escape? (Dervin, 1977: 24).

The children's librarian must serve not only children but also adults who work with children. They should go out with books to places where such people as teachers and camp counsellors gather, they can develop workshops for storytellers and they can make themselves available to book publishers who may wish to consult them as to what children read and buy (Warncke, 1963: 85-6).

It would appear that there is a consensus among the authorities that librarians, by their personality and enthusiasm should, if possible, teach children to enjoy books when in their company so that later these children will derive the same satisfaction when on their own (Chambers, 1973: 2).

A final aspect of the public librarian to be considered is his ability to evaluate the available material.

Writing some 40 years ago, Anderson observed that, although research had been undertaken in an attempt to determine what

people read, very little had been done to find out more than the names of the actual books read, as opposed to discovering the reasons why people read them. He deplores this fact because, according to him, without knowledge of what constitutes reader appeal, it will not be possible to capitalize on interest, which has been found to be a factor of great importance (Anderson, 1940: 266).

Two decades later, Chambers remarks that much of what children are given to read is unsuitable for their needs. The need for re-examining the type of books suggested is, he feels, especially important during the pre-adolescent years. His reason for emphasizing the early reading years is that although much reluctance only manifests itself at adolescence, he believes that the seeds have been sown at a much earlier age (Chambers, 1969: 63).

Writing as late as 1977 Landy also remarks that, although reader interests have been examined, the factors which influence those interests have not (Landy, 1977: 380).

It would therefore appear that it is necessary for each individual librarian to evaluate his material according to basic standards and to attempt to reach an understanding of which material will be suitable for the needs of which child.

3.3.3.2.1 **Reward system**: (cf. also 2.1.4) Authorities in the literature surveyed do not appear to have reached consensus regarding the merit of the reward system whereby children

are rewarded for the quantity or quality of the books which they have read. This system is employed by librarians in order to stimulate reading. It is hoped that once a child can be induced to read he will discover, for himself, that it is an enjoyable activity, one on which it is worth expending effort (Dunkle, 1974: 244).

Those who consider that the system is worthwhile applying as a means of encouraging reading, suggest that a book award should be given on special occasions, such as when a child borrows his first book from the library (Cohen, 1976: 714). Many children who are reluctant to read may not as yet grasp the value of reading for its own sake and in such cases rewards could be given, although it is felt that this should be only for the quality of books read and not for quantity (An interview ..., 1973: 689).

In certain cases, such as those of the disadvantaged child, rewards can be of great influence because such children are, by and large, unused to external rewards. This may therefore provide immediate gratification and perhaps build up their self-image. Once a positive self-image has been established internal rewards can be appreciated, i.e. the satisfaction derived from reading (An interview ..., 1973: 690).

An authority who is not in favour of the reward system is Doris Gates. In her view, a reward for the mere quantity of reading constitutes a cheapening of the value of literature, thus defeating the purpose of the reward. In her considered opinion reading during the school term is mostly for a pur-

pose, often denying the child the opportunity of discovering the fact that reading can also be purely for pleasure. She deplores the reward system being used by the public library during the summer holidays, claiming that it removes the pleasure aspect from reading and once again makes reading competitive, something to be done for a purpose. She believes that in order for children to reach the understanding that the true reward for reading is the pleasure derived from the activity itself, it is necessary to teach them that it is the quantity of good books remembered rather than merely the quantity of books read which determines how well read you are (Gates, 1956: 165).

This is possibly a slightly invalid argument on her part as she appears to have brought the question of criteria into a discussion on the reward system. However, her basic point, being that reward for quantity is competitive - which may preclude pleasure from reading - is one which is echoed by all the authorities.

Although Frank Jennings, a librarian, contends that the reward system may do no harm and may draw children into the library, others such as Mary Gaboda do not agree and consider that nothing positive is achieved in the endeavour to diminish the incidence of reading reluctance. She feels that a good program will achieve far more than rewards. She has found that when the summer is over and the rewards are no longer offered the new readers fall away and the only ones left are the 'old faithfuls' (Jennings, 1956: 2393-7;

Gaboda, 1956: 2398).

To support her argument against Jennings, Gates cites Helen A. Bowen who contends that the avid reader needs constructive guidance rather than motivation if he is to remain a reader. The child who reads with difficulty needs encouragement rather than rewards for competing against his brighter peers if he is to become a reader.

It would seem that there is a consensus that rewards will not provide the answer in the efforts towards diminishing the incidence of reader reluctance. Even those who support the reward system, support it only limitedly.

3.3.3.3 BOOKS

By definition (cf. also 2.3.2) the concept of a library and books is that of 2 parts of 1 whole. Despite the introduction of non-book materials, such as audio-visual aids, into the library, the book has still an important role to play in the majority of libraries. If these libraries are unable to bring books and readers together, they would seem to be failing in their duty and their right to existence as public-supported bodies, should possibly be questioned. It is for this reason that many of the writers have paid much attention to the importance of the judicious selection of books and to the best means of promoting their use.

A discussion on the use of books in an attempt to diminish the incidence of reluctant reading includes book selection, early book-borrowing and the arrangement of books in the

library. All this, however, tends to be of no avail if the books themselves do not appeal to the children.

3.3.3.3.1 **Book selection**: The pros and cons of applying adult criteria to book selection have been argued at length previously in this thesis (cf. also 2.3.3.3.1). It seems appropriate to bear in mind Blishen's injunction that once a child accepts the concept of books and reading his natural curiosity will probably encourage him to read better books (Blishen, 1974: 216).

It is when the child begins to select books for himself that it is important that the books selected by the librarian will be those he seeks. Books should therefore be selected with children's interests and needs in mind (Gagliardo, 1971: 6). Now, in the latter half of the twentieth century, more than ever an awareness of these needs seems necessary, especially as children's personalities and ability to think seem to be developing earlier (Medvedeva, 1972: 203).

3.3.3.3.2 **Book borrowing at an early age**: The influence of books and the absence thereof at an early age has been a constant theme throughout this thesis and has been discussed extensively in sections 2.2.6, 2.2.8.1, 3.2.1 and 3.3.1. There appears to be unanimity of opinion among the authorities concerning the value of permitting the child who has not yet achieved the skill of reading to borrow books from the library. Most children have someone at home who will be

prepared to read to them, but even if there is not there is much to be gained if they are eager to look at the pictures. They can acquire information, develop visual discrimination and develop a desire to read for themselves. By looking at picture books children learn to follow the continuity of the story, guessing at its outcome, they extend their experiences and an appreciation of the beauty and humour of the illustrations tends to become established (Archer, 1963: 424). It is hoped that early borrowing will convince children that a library card is a passport to joy and pleasure and that this in turn will prevent them from becoming reluctant readers (Arbuthnot, 1957: 34).

3.3.3.3.3 <u>Arrangement of books in the library</u>: (cf. also 2.1.6) The ideal method of arranging books in the children's library is by subject - an issue which, although hotly debated, has not as yet been decided. Basically there are those who believe that books should be shelved together, irrespective of their level of difficulty although some believe that the books should bear some form of differential identification. There are others who prefer to sectionalize books either according to subject interest or levels of difficulty.

It is suggested by Margaret Dunkle that all books except picture books should be interfiled and a label be applied to those of simpler format. She feels that if this is done the good reader will come into contact with all the books in the

library, but will prevent the slower reader from being stigmatized when he of necessity uses the "baby" section of the library. Both Dunkle and Skovhoj hope that this will boost the ego of the slow reader. They feel this to be important, as slow readers often tend to become reluctant readers and will never think of reading further than their assignments (Dunkle, 1974: 243-4; Skovhoj, 1975: 166-70).

There are a variety of viewpoints concerning the shelving of books, not only for the slow reader but also for the in-between reader, being one who can read but is intimidated by the large range of junior books. In an open discussion between librarians 1 suggestion was to divide the bookstock according to interests and then again according to age levels. If this method is used, Emmerson cautions that it is necessary for the librarian to endeavour to prevent children becoming attached to 1 section and failing to progress to more varied or more difficult books. It was observed that this method is of great assistance if the library has only 1 librarian who may not always be available to assist the child. If books are organized according to age levels it tends to obviate a loss of heart caused by failure to cope with books which are too difficult for the child's capabilities. One of the librarians, Emmerson, advocated (as did Dunkle and Skovhoj) interfiling of books which, she felt tended to prevent embarrassment for the child who had reading difficulties because they would find these books side by side with those of their peers (Fitzgerald, 1969:

20-1).

According to Fitzgerald's survey of the literature teen-age in-between books are approved by all and she advises that adult books be interfiled with these books within the children's library, available for those who have read all the children's books (Fitzgerald, 1969: 21-2). This does, however, seem to be slightly at variance with the views expressed in section 3.3.3 where a completely separate teen-age library, albeit with adult books incorporated, is the ideal envisaged.

From the above it would seem apparent that there is no easy or obvious solution to the problem as to the best method of arranging books in the library. It seems that the choice lies with each individual librarian to decide which method would serve his readers to the best advantage and prevent the largest number of users from developing into reluctant readers.

3.3.3.3.4 **Book appeal**: (cf. also 2.3.3.3.4 and 2.3.3.3.5) If it is true that a child will read what he wants to read, it would seem to be of some importance that the material provided for his first reading experiences should be of interest to him (Batchelor, 1961: 325).

It is suggested by Arbuthnot that to be of interest a book needs an adequate theme, lively plot, memorable characters and a distinctive style. Children, she maintains, want heroes who are able to overcome obstacles and they will be

prepared to read in order to discover how this is achieved (Arbuthnot, 1957: 16).

A book writes Duhkle should, have instant appeal, geared to the swift pace of television and comics. She suggests that it is possible to involve the hesitant reader in books through the use of amusing books such as Henge's 'Tintin', which have the format of comics. Mystery and adventure books are also, in her opinion, often good starting points. However, she cautions that it must be remembered that many slow readers are deep thinkers and may not enjoy such books (Dunkle, 1974: 245).

According to Groff, books are also needed to cope with the maturity thrust upon slum children. Many of their mothers work outside the home and as a result these children need such knowledge as methods of food preparation, house cleaning and the tending of siblings. Often these children may also need books which will enable them to teach their illiterate parents. He claims that books which establish self-esteem are necessary for these children (cf. also 2.1.6 and 2.2.8). There should also be books, he writes, which will discourage a passive acceptance of the status quo and will demonstrate that protest against inequality is not sufficient (Groff, 1963: 347).

The youth of the seventies are, according to Rinsky and Schweikeit, no more like the youth of 25 years ago than the realities of the seventies are like those of the fifties. If literature is to be more than purely escapist it should be a

reflection of this harshness. It should deal with those subjects which previously were considered taboo, such as one-parent families, alcoholic parents, the changing roles of the male and the female, unwanted pregnancies and drugs. However, the writers qualify this statement when they state that it is not the themes themselves which are of importance but the concern shown for human dignity, being a genuine concern for the quality of life. Such books are needed to provide a humane and humanizing reading environment for children (Rinsky & Schweikeit, 1977: 472-5).It is thought that 1 reason for the difficulty in creating readers can be attributed to the fact that literature tends to fall into 2 categories, namely of an unofficial kind (which is forbidden or frowned upon) and of an official kind. It is humanly natural, writes Blishen, for the unoffi- cial reason to seem to be the more potent of the two. He hopes that the removal of these barriers would enlarge the range of books which would appeal to children (Blishen, 1974: 215).

It is suggested that a large part of book appeal stems from book jackets upon which much money is expended. These jackets are hidden from view when books are shelved, side by side, in the conventional manner. Therefore, the use of various types of book displays such as bins and buckets should be encouraged (Cohen, 1976: 714).

The authorities are in agreement that the importance of book appeal is such that it is both the librarian and the publisher's work to expend time and effort on it.

3.3.3.4 **LIBRARY PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN** (cf. also 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.1.2.3)

The variety of projects which have been initiated in an attempt to encourage children to read and in order to prevent reader reluctance is endless. The following projects have been culled from the literature surveyed.

The reason for the proliferation of library projects appears to be based on the concept postulated among others by Judith Goldberger that the more children are stimulated the more they will want to read, the more they will read the better they will be able to read, and this in turn should herald an effective beginning to the struggle to achieve a cessation of reader reluctance (Goldberger, 1978: 383). If this is true, it would seem that

> "Interest ...is the primary factor to be considered in attempting to stimulate reading. When it is present, reading is vitally satisfying to the needs of the personality. Without it reading is sterile and mechanical" (Spache, 1958: 2).

The library projects surveyed were usually developed in order to achieve a specific aim and were often directed towards 1 particular group. There has been no empirical evaluation of these projects, their success having been assumed from the fact that they have been suggested by librarians, writing in a variety of professional magazines.

Included are projects designed to

1) make the library more informal by the introduction of non-book material such as comics;

2) teach children how to make greater use of library resources by studying a variety of aspects of a given theme;

3) interest children in books through the use of drama;

4) attract attention to books through the use of music;

5) introduce both adults and children to books by the organization of book fairs;

6) involve adults in the children's library,acquainting them with its resources and activities;

7) provide a social centre for children;

8) inform the public especially about books which are available and to generally advertise the library;

9) interest children in books of quality;

10) interest children in books through the use of incentives;

11) attract and amuse readers during the summer months when school libraries are closed;

12) be of value to the community in general and not only to those who normally frequent the library.

3.3.3.4.1 **The introduction of non-book material into the children's library**: (cf. also 2.3.2.1.2, 3.3.2.1.4, 3.3.3.1 and 4.3.2.1.1) The introduction of non-book material broadened the base of interest in the library, tending to create a more informal atmosphere and giving the library an up-to-date image.

A library is a manifestation of all its activities and each

of these has its part to play in creating an image which will appeal to the young. All children do not have the same needs and no child has the same needs all the time; therefore the greater the variety of material available at the library the greater the possibilities are that the child will look towards the library to stimulate and to satisfy these needs. It is only through the use of all available resources that the library will achieve the goal of providing the right book for the right child at the right time (Bruner, 1963: 71).

The importance of both book and non-book material in the attempt to prevent reader reluctance is succinctly described in the following allegory:

> "Aesop might have written a fable thus: A dispute once arose between Book and Non-book in a public library as to which was the more persuasive of the two. They agreed therefore, to try their power upon a young patron to see who should be able to lure him into the library first. Book began by coaxing him with adventure, science and poetry. But the more enticing Book became, the faster away from the library the young patron walked saying, "I do not want to read". Then came Non-book with pictures, music, and activity. The young patron thus lured by the film-showing, club meetings, story hour, and tempting displays entered the library, looked and then began to read. Thus Non-book was declared the winner" (Bruner, 1963: 71).

An example of the combination of both book and non-book is a fairy-tale tree. The tree has nests, each containing eggs, inside each of which is a story. It is hoped that this novel approach will tempt children into reading these stories (Bruner, 1963: 71).

In a library in Bedford, England, provision is made for the swapping of comics, for the showing and making of films and available is a T-shirt bearing the slogan "I'M GETTING MINE from Bedford Library where the good books are". Taylor, the librarian, believes that reading must be a continuum in a child's life and a little light relief makes the acquisition of the habit of reading more enjoyable (Libraries and the educational process, 1977: 229).

Comic swapping is also organized in Birmingham, England and comics are made available so as to provide an intermediary or familiar approach to library facilities (Ray, 1977 :182).

Audio-visual material can be put to good use in libraries. Films, filmstrips and records are used for the amplification of stories and for setting the appropriate mood for story-telling. Story records may prove more dramatic than the local story teller and have the added benefit of teaching a modicum of musical appreciation (Bruner, 1963: 72, 74).

In Toms River, New Jersey, USA in an attempt to attract them through the visual medium, they may borrow art prints (Children can ..., 1978: 2156).

The Helsingberg Library in Sweden encourages children's theatrics, brings out a library journal published by children and attempts to have available toys and records complementary to their book stock. They have found that there is a direct relationship between their entertainment program and their borrowing in both their adult and children's library. If they reduce entertainment library usage declines

(Kylberg, 1974: 103).

In order to attract children, libraries have designed activities for children with specific interests (cf. also 3.2.5). A hobbies club and pet lending are two examples of such activities.

Capitalizing on children's natural desire to be actively creative a library in New York City, USA established a hobby club which operated both in the library (e.g. building kites) or went on creative visits (e.g. pottery, silk-screening). Curiosity brought children to the club, and they thus discovered that the library could supply the answers to many of their questions related to their hobbies (Benjamin, 1968: 265-6).

Pets, plus all necessary equipment, were supplied to children including a sheet of instructions on the care and history of the species. Lectures on animal cruelty were also organized. The scheme was a success, establishing stronger links between library and child and an added incentive for reading and library use to become a life long habit (Holleman, 1977: 142).

Urban children are often schizoid between street violence and school regimentation. Therefore, by means of such clubs as the one Benjamin described above libraries in the poorer areas of large cities can become a link between life and learning (Benjamin, 1968: 265).

Using a novelty to attract the interest of children into visiting the library, a public library in Texas, USA, con-

structed a tree house in which children could meet for reading and book talks. Children appreciated having their own special place in the library (Orr, 1978: 386).

Another novel approach is that of a small municipal library which has games available on loan. This is especially useful in that it enables parents to try them before purchase (Plum, 1977: 466-77).

It is also hoped that the projects mentioned above and many others will attract children who otherwise might never have come to the library, and having seen what is available would become regular library users.

3.3.3.4.2 **The encouragement of greater use of library resources**: The project system has previously been discussed in sections 2.3.1.4 and 3.3.2.2.7. The public library can also teach children how to derive maximum benefit from library resources by adapting the project method.

An example of this is the 'book buzz' started as a summer project at Belleville Public Library in Illinois, USA. It consists of a weekly program exploring various aspects of themes such as wild animals or life on the Mississippi. The program is divided into age groups, story time, songs, crafts, games and creative play being used to make a varied and stimulating program. This program has proved so popular that it has now become permanent and is run by volunteers from outside organizations (Volunteers for book buzz, 1978: 126).

Librarians, no less than parents can link everyday life with books (cf. also 3.2.5). Activities which will appeal particularly to the more active child who is often reluctant to sit quietly listening to or reading a book can be arranged. Once interest is stimulated the librarian can subtly steer the attention of the child towards the wealth of additional information available on this and other subjects.

The National Endowment for the Humanities in collaboration with the Public Library sponsored a program enabling the children of Tucson, Arizona, USA to learn about both the culture and the history of the Sonoran Desert region. Children observed the Papago going about their normal daily activities and participated in plays based on the legends of the area and also story hours. The project proved a great success and drew attention to the wealth of library material available for finding additional information on the Papago (Tucson children enjoy N.E.H. learning library, 1978: 99).

It is hoped that once the child becomes aware of the library's resources through one experience they will naturally turn to the library if they require information on other subjects.

3.3.3.4.3 **Interest children in books through the use of drama**: (cf. also 3.3.2.1.2.3) For many children, watching a live performance of a play or participating in a theatrical production enables them to enjoy a story which they are incapable of visualizing without the perceptual stimuli.

Moreover participating in a theatrical production may free them from inhibitions which may have resulted from an insufficient literary background.

In Yonkers, New York, USA 2 professional productions are put on monthly by the library for its 28,000 registered child readers. Each program is selected to appeal to children within a 3 year interest span, a film usually being provided for those who do not fit into this category. Free tickets are limited to children, but from the first to the fifteenth of the month are only available to those who have never attended any previous performance. The library has also established a free bus-service to ferry children to and from the show (Schoenfeld, 1965: 352-5).

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA the librarians believe that if children are not restricted by script and memorized lines, they will be free to "explore the essentials of drama - action, plot, character, dialogue - and use these for building blocks of their creating" (Fertik, 1968: 160).

Acting causes children to become aware both of themselves and of the world around them. It was found that many children who were unable to cope with academic learning owing to poor speech skills and limited reading ability could succeed in creative drama. The program, being library orientated, helped to establish the idea that literature and libraries were exciting worlds to explore and enjoy. Moreover, the librarian became a person with a name.

Many other benefits were derived by children from this un-

structured dramatic program among which was a clearer comprehension, a greater use of the imaginative processes and an increase in vocabulary. They developed a less timid attitude coupled with an ability to express themselves more freely, their poise improved and friends were gained. The children's interest in books increased,more was read and with better understanding and skill. There was also a new awareness of the knowledge contained in books and the library's use as a reference centre. The child had thus gained in reading skills,self esteem and a broadening of interest. Over and above this it was found that children began to see the library as an integral part of the community and not just as a dusty place only to be visited when it was necessary to obtain books (Fertik, 1968: 160-4). The library, by incorporating other mediums, can attract users who otherwise may have been unaware of their own needs to become readers.

3.3.3.4.4 **Attracting attention to books through the use of music**: In order that all will borrow and use the reading room, public interest needs to be stimulated. The Medellin pilot Public Library in Latin America attempts to attract attention through the medium of music and art.

At least once per week, a concert is given for children using records from a selected collection, followed by discussion. The concerts are amplified with pictures and stories related to music. Occasional live performances,

such as choral singing are also included.

For those who are more inclined towards art there is a weekly drawing class and an annual art competition (Arroyave, 1957: 275-6).

This musical approach has many variations. It was found that if children were asked to associate books read with similar records they tended to begin paging through the books and listening more carefully to the words of the songs (Feldstein, 1973: 3129).

Another method suggested is to use a record to introduce a group of books, e.g. Joan Baez singing "The night they drove old Dixie down" could serve as an introduction to books on the American Civil War. It is hoped that this type of approach will alter the image of the library which tends to exist in children's minds. It will, hopefully, be thought of as a place which is exciting and creative and not as one which is forbidding and restrictive (Feldstein, 1973: 3129). If their image of the library changes and disinterested children begin to read and enjoy books it should help to prevent a large percentage of children from becoming permanently reluctant readers.

3.3.3.4.5 **Book fairs**: The problem of adults being non-conversant with children's literature was discussed in sections 2.3.1.3, 3.2.15 and 3.3.2.2.1. Fairs have been organized in order to rectify this lack of knowledge providing a pleasant atmosphere in which adults and children

can become acquainted with books. Such a fair was initiated in Jackson County, Oregon, USA in 1967. It proved so popular that in 1977 14,000 people attended. The fair included a wide spectrum of events both for spectators and participants (Munn, 1977: 122-3).

By drawing on the talents of the community it is hoped that many people will become aware of the importance of reading and of the quality of children's literature currently available.

3.3.3.4.6 **Adult involvement in the library**: The importance of adult involvement in preventing reader reluctance has been a recurrent theme throughout this thesis. Parents, teachers and librarians all have an influence on the child's attitude towards reading.

In order to involve parents in the children's library, subtly making them aware of its resources and of the needs of their children, the library in Helsingberg, Sweden, encourages parent-teacher associations to gather informally in the library. These meeting have proved so popular that they have to be booked 6 months in advance (Kylberg, 1974: 99).

Mothers are usually the prime influence in a child's early life (cf. also 2.2.5 and 3.2.1). In order to assist them the Youngstown Public Library in Ohio, USA established, in 1936, according to Catherine Butler, the first Mother's Room in the world, i.e. a room with books for adults to read to

their children. It was based on the belief that children who are read to have far larger vocabularies than their peers. It was hoped that this type of room would teach mothers how to instil in their children the love of books and reading and also to help them to make their children into responsible users of the library.

Another mother's room described is in the Carnegie Library, Homestead, Pennsylvania, USA. There, mothers will find not only old favourites, being the picture books and poems of their childhood, which they may wish to include in their own children's backgrounds, but also books on psychology and child problems, and child care and training (Butler, 1958: 572-3).

The Central Public Library of the District of Columbia, USA established 3 special collections of books which they housed in rooms adjacent to the children's room.

These collections consisted of the best of the circulating children's books and an advisory staff; a non-circulating collection representing the best titles in many fields and all still in print (used heavily by people intending to purchase books); and a non-circulating illustrator's collection (MacDonald, 1959: 299-300). The library hopes that these collections will possibly affect the parents' influence on their children's reading development, the importance of which has already been discussed in sections 2.2 and 3.2.

Louisville Free Public Library, USA, also concentrated on the

importance of mothers in the child's literary development and established a workshop for mothers of pre-school children. They are placed in an area adjacent to the story hour, affording them the opportunity of becoming aware of what is being done for their children and to ensure proximity to the material discussed. They are introduced to the library service and are also given instruction as to the best methods of encouraging their children to enjoy reading. Later they join their children and view together films and filmstrips for pre-schoolers. At the end of the workshop they are required to evaluate both the workshop itself and the pre-school story hour (Sheviak, 1960: 1658-9). It is hoped that by these means reader reluctance will be prevented before the child leaves the sheltered home environment. The importance of positive literary experience for the pre-schooler has been discussed in sections 2.2.8 and 3.3.1. As parents are not the only adults who influence children's reading, a program was established in 1971 in the children's department of the Orlando Public Library, Florida, USA, which concentrated on adults and teenagers who work with children. It was decided to illustrate to them the need to share literature with children.

The library developed workshops demonstrating the technique of introducing books to children and acquainting adults with the library's resources. They also compile and distribute information useful for those involved in children's reading. The workshops have been attended by thousands of people and

have become an excellent promotion for the library for there were many who had not previously been aware of its existence (Petersen, 1976: 100-2).

These are but a few of the projects designed to bring adults, children and books together in the hope that a positive interaction may prevent reader reluctance.

3.3.3.4.7 <u>The library as a social centre</u>: The ideal of the public library being the social centre of every town and village has already been mooted in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.3.1. Moreover if one examines the concept behind all the enterprises described in this section, viz. 3.3.3.4 it will be found that this is the underlying objective. In order that all will borrow or use the reading room, public interest needs to be stimulated.

The Ludington reading rooms are an example of the library being used as a social centre. They are centred in the North Western part of America around Detroit, funded by Mr. Ludington, the scheme "represents a private investment in public welfare" (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 86). These reading rooms, although in schools are open even when school is closed and carry a variety of materials including comics used not only by pupils, but by hundreds of parents many of whom are almost illiterate and have to put considerable effort into reading. Thus parents and children are brought together under one roof in a combined effort of reading. So successful has the reading room program been and so great

the drop in juvenile delinquency in these areas that the police assist the scheme by transporting paperbacks to the schools in squad cars (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 88-9).

Another project designed to decrease delinquency by introducing a reading motivation program based on the method projected in Fader and McNeil's book Hooked on books was Project READ (Reading Efficiency And Delinquency), a national program introduced after a survey in the USA in 1974 revealed that approximately one-third of the children in correctional institutions were illiterate, while the rest read below chronological age (Coil, 1978: 36).

The ideal of the children's library in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is that the Medellin Library (cf. also 3.3.3.4.4) should become the centre of the community

> "...it is not only a library ...it is a social institution, educational centre ...a guide in the formation of the children's character, being, at the same time, hope, and a preparation for life" (Fraccaroli, 1960: 1987).

Initially, as an incentive for children to go to the library films were shown only to members. Illustrated books were borrowed at the beginning but later interest grew. In order to participate in the many activities offered by the library the children had to first read for a while. In Fraccaroli's opinion it produces men of character because it is an agreeable place (Fraccaroli, 1960: 1987-9).

Sometimes, instead of the library itself becoming a social centre, a social centre is formed outside the library premises. The Chicago Public Library, USA (cf. also 2.2.8.4)

aware that tower blocks tend to have a dehumanizing influence on the children living in them, rented a flat in a tower block with the intention of developing a community centre, the main emphasis of which would be reading and studying. Only residents of the housing estate were employed because it was felt that those with a vested interest would work to their full capacities. It was found that, if tower blocks were provided with community action, interest in reading and self-education was stimulated (Adams, 1973: 152).

The idea of employing only residents would seem to be valid in the light of Colson's findings when assessing the High John Project (USA). He found that a library cannot be thrust upon a community, but that the community must be involved in its creation. This seems especially true if li- brary use is alien to the lives and needs of that community. It will be little used by adults and the children will tend to regard it as more of a community educational centre than as a source of books (Colson, 1973: 2819-20).

It is anticipated that if the library becomes important to the community, the people of the community will become interested in its resources and gradually become regular library users.

3.3.3.4.8 <u>Advertising the library</u>: Many people are unaware of the resources available at the library. In order to capture and sustain interest in reading various organi-

zations publish mimeographed sheets of one type or another. These programs have been compiled around a basic philosophy, being that the most efficient method of stimulating new reading interests is to build upon or relate to present interests (Anderson, 1940: 258).

The Minneapolis Public Library, Minnesota, USA issues a series of mimeographed sheets advertising books which are similar to each other. The sheets give a title and author of a book and suggest that if this was enjoyed by the child there are other books (which they name) which might also be a source of pleasure.

In the University High School of the University of Chicago, Illinois, USA, Edith E. Shepherd issues a series of mimeographed sheets on which essays are suggested all connected with a given theme. Lists can also be obtained which lead the pupil from the more juvenile to the more advanced books (Anderson, 1940: 258-9).

It is hoped that whatever spark of interest the child may have in reading will be fanned by the additional information furnished as above.

3.3.3.4.9 **Books of literary quality**: A book is only good, writes Aborne, if children read and enjoy it. Accordingly, it was decided that a program should be developed to stimulate interest in the Newbery award winning books.

As preparation for this program the books were re-read so as to obtain a working knowledge of each. All the appropriate

filmstrips and records were collected. A short history of the Newbery award and its criteria for judging books was developed. It was felt that the latter was a necessary question to consider while reading the books. Lastly an annotated list of the books was drawn up.

Participation in the program was voluntary, a reward system being used to encourage membership. The children were asked to indicate their reactions to the various books to enable the librarian to assess the types of books which proved the most popular.

Certain conclusions among them, that not all the books were considered to be deserving of the prize; that audio-visual equipment stimulated interest as did peer acceptance and that few of the books would be read without encouragement. Lastly it was decided that librarians must read more and have the time to encourage pupils to approach and read good literature (Aborne, 1974: 1195-7).

3.3.3.4.10 **Incentives**: The pros and cons, of the reward system are discussed at length in section 2.1.4 and 3.3.3.2.1. In Miami, Oklahoma, USA a "Snoopy book" award was established at one of the local schools, awarded for the number of books taken out of the public library and read during a given period. The idea was to make children aware of the public library and its contents with the use of a popular comic figure with which all would associate (Polette & Hamlin, 1975: 51-2).

3.3.3.4.11 **The summer months**: It is during the long hot summer months when the school library is closed that the public library has its greatest opportunity to attract readers. However, it is during these months, when outdoor activities are at their most attractive, that children are least likely to wish to read. A variety of programs have been designed to take place during the summer. It is hoped that they will assist in the prevention of reader reluctance. The line between prevention and cure is sometimes very fine therefore many of the ideas could equally successfully be attempted irrespective of whether the children involved are potentially or already reluctant readers. The ideas that follow are but a few of a multitude of suggestions.

The Public Library of Columbia and Franklin County, USA, in order to attract readers, organized entertainers and issued rewards for the first children who registered and for those who completed the summer reading program (Kids & Y. As., 1977: 2001).

In Tennessee, USA, when schools closed for the summer, the school system realizing that availability could be a problem, provided free daily transportation to the public library (Kids & Y. As., 1977: 2001).

In Colorado Aurora Public Library, USA, free passes were given for various outdoor activities as a reward for every book read in the summer program (Kids & Y. As., 1977: 2001).

Fitchburg Youth Library, Massachusetts, USA aware of the importance of parental involvement offered instruction on the use of toys and games and a babysitting service (Kids & Y. As., 1977: 2001).

In Fremontd Public Library, Michigan, USA, free icecream cones and a paperback were the incentives given to children who had finished the program (Kids & Y. As., 1977: 2001).

A creative dance group was used to enliven the summer reading program, thus making storytelling an audio-visual experience. Although there was the danger of divided attention, there was the desire to illustrate the possibility of the library combining its activities with other groups. The program proved a great success (Sheviak, 1959: 1304-5).

Many of the ideas included in this section included a reward, the pros and cons of which were discussed earlier in section 3.3.3.2.1. Field discusses this concept with particular reference to the summer reading programs. She feels that if the librarian uses it as a means of moving the child on to reading better books and if the librarian is aware of the books which the child does read then there can be no harm in rewarding the child. If, however, it is merely used to boost circulation figures and if the librarian asks for and never reads the children's reviews, then the system is not recommended. She recognizes that many join for the reward, e.g. a pin but what she feels to be important is whether or not they remain to discuss books with their peers. The reward may draw them into the library but it is

the books themselves which must keep them there (Field, 1963: 885).

Many librarians consider the incentive of a reward in regard to the summer program to be valueless and feel that the emphasis should be on a good program (Gaboda, 1956: 2398).

One of the problems of summer programs is that they do tend to cater for the converted and it is found that those who come are usually the average to better than average readers and therefore as an attempt to influence the reluctant reader summer programs are of limited value (Fair, 1945: 523).

3.3.3.4.12 **Community involvement**: The public library, by definition, does not exist in a vacuum but is part of the social framework of a community. This theme has been referred to both in the chapter on causes of reluctance in section 2.3.2 and earlier in this chapter in section 3.3.1 concerning the development of the pre-school child.

A library which restricts itself to be of service only to those who frequent it is unlikely to influence the incidence of reader reluctance greatly. If readers are to be attracted from within the ranks of the non-library users it would seem necessary for the library to attempt to serve the community through unconventional channels, hoping that this will inspire people to take a closer look at its resources.

An example of this type of extra-service activity has been undertaken since 1965 in Helsingberg, Sweden, where in

certain departmental stores parents are invited to leave their children at the Public Library while they shop. Since 1974 the service has been completely taken over by the Department of Social Welfare, the library itself is responsible only for supplying the room and the books. Not only shoppers but parents who are studying can make use of this scheme. Children introduced to the library in this manner, become used to using the library and develop into the keenest of borrowers (Kylberg, 1974: 99).

In an attempt to stimulate visual perception and spatial relationships, both necessary if the acquisition of the skill of reading is to be a pleasure, North Carolina Public Library, USA, offers a variety of puzzles which the public may borrow. They also take the puzzles to people's homes, demonstrating to parents their use as teaching tools. This is a means of reaching children who are not at nursery school or in a program such as Head Start, which were described in section 3.3.1.2. The library decided that if there was no climate of learning at home no amount of money spent at school would be of value.

The library also fetches children bringing them to the library for what is often the only pre-school group work some ever experience. An added bonus is that the librarian acquired a new image and is no longer solely associated with books (McRae, 1978: 616, 635-6).

Not only can libraries provide unusual services within their own walls but it is also possible to extend themselves

beyond their walls and to go to where the people are. In Soviet Russia summers are short and people like to spend as much time outdoors as possible. Therefore during these months, in order to overcome the decrease in reading which tends to occur and to attract new readers, libraries and literary activities are established in parks (Pervoushina, 1972: 44-7).

Books can be brought to the people, viz. school playgrounds. Staff can thus be met on their homeground and book borrowing is facilitated (Hill, 1974: 35-6). Heie found that in Sweden and Denmark the supplying of information to nursery schools and parent groups had proved more effective than had extensive activity in the children's library itself (Heie, 1977: 249-50). Doctor's waiting rooms and welfare centres can also serve as book depots (Kylberg, 1974: 101).

The gaining of prestige is a reason for a library to involve itself in community activities. Participation in government committees such as the Committee for Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Study which was held in 1959 in the USA and on which public libraries were represented is an example of such involvement. Sometimes such participation is unexpected. At a one-day storytelling seminar for public and school librarians held by the Public Library of Madison, Wisconsin, USA, student nurses from the paediatric department of the local hospital also attended (Blackshear, 1961: 3007-8).

Another example of this is the factory loan scheme in

Cleveland, Ohio, USA where factories are offered the loan of books for both adults and children. The object of the scheme is to introduce books into homes where previously they were irrelevant and to underline the importance of books and reading to the pre-school child. Often exhaustion and limited time and accessibility had been deterrents and it was hoped that this scheme would help alleviate these problems.

The scheme was based on the premise that a disadvantaged child is one who has not had the opportunity to be introduced to books from an early age and has therefore not been allowed to develop his imagination. Such a child can come from any groups of society and it was felt that it was difficult to develop an interest in books in later life (Fletcher & Jenkins, 1977: 191-4).

Libraries are sometimes involved in long-term experiments such as one undertaken in East Riding, England designed to inform parents of the children's library's resources, to encourage children to read more and with greater discrimination and to enable children and parents to share valuable experiences.

The experiment was conducted after it had been concluded that this is an age of fact finding, an age when the materialist approach tends to make people think that non-fiction books are the more worthwhile and to regard children who only read non-fiction as being intellectual and advanced (cf. also 2.2.2).

Project work (cf. also 2.3.1.4.2 and 3.3.2.2.9) also calls for this emphasis. It was found that literature was often neglected and that many children only came into contact with it limitedly through the 'classics'.

Teachers, having decided that they know little about children's literature began to read for themselves and then later to their pupils. The School Department of the County Library became involved arranging book-related activities and supplying books. It was found that the children began to read with greater discrimination, the teachers became more knowledgeable and more time was devoted to reading in school, it having become a pleasurable experience. Thus the experiment helped both to prevent and cure reluctant readers.

It was also found that children from bookish homes tended to find reading easier and more pleasurable than those who came from non-bookish backgrounds, therefore an experiment involving 4 families was undertaken. Each family was given books, to be read where possible by both parents and children or by parents to their children if necessary. Subsequently parents, children and organizer came together to discuss the books, and eventually a reading group resulted. Similar groups have since developed, both adults and children enjoying the experience and enriched by it, bearing out C.S. Lewis's opinion that a book which is enjoyed only by children is a bad book (Astbury, 1972: 231-2).

The Penny Library in Belgium was another such experiment

carried out because it was thought that children should be encouraged to purchase books from their own resources rather than to receive them as presents, thus reading should become a felt need. A small annual sum was paid by the children if they wished to join the library and a deposit could be made in order to purchase a book from the library. It was found that the children enjoyed the concept of choosing and ordering books (Stenbock-Fermor, 1970: 153-7).

If children are never allowed to choose their own books, Taylor wonders how they will be able to develop their taste in reading. If children are allowed to choose for themselves they will often take quite unexpected titles. If they purchase books of their own choice they will not only be exercising their reading tastes but will learn something of the value of book investment (Taylor, 1947: 270-2).

In Helsingberg, Sweden the library involves itself in the educational process of the Swedish children by instructing such professionals as teachers and nurses in the use of children's books. Moreover, to enable people to learn Swedish more easily television cassettes in 4 other languages are supplied (Kylberg, 1974: 100-2).

In Sweden the libraries work closely with the National Immigrant Service and the local school board, supplying books which will aid the immigrant to integrate easily. Also supplied are books in foreign languages, these being placed in branches in areas with the largest immigrant populations. Story hours are held in Finnish and Swedish

language courses for adults are run by the children's libraries concurrently with activities for their children (Jonsson, 1972: 553-7).

It has been found that if a library provides foreign books for children this will favourably affect the community. Word spreads and children are likely to come to the library to see if there are books for them in their home language. This should prevent them feeling ashamed of their own language and culture. Contact with foreign speakers may heighten an interest in language learning among other children, and they may well take home books for their friends to translate (Kirscher, 1958: 947-8, 950).

Community involvement may take the form of advertising, cards being sent to the inhabitants informing them of the hours and address of the library and indicating the library's position on maps of the city (Torngren, 1977: 67). Sometimes things are reversed and the community involves itself in the library. When in 1946 the Canadian Federation of University Women found that 95% of rural Canada had no public library service they instituted a reading stimulation grant over the following 15-year period which resulted in an increase in library use and a growth of regional libraries. One of their projects was an attempt to measure the reading stimulation in books on various topics. Research began in Manitoba, where there were 2,405 public school children, most of whom had never seen a children's library or a display of children's books. It was found that music bio-

graphies became favourites through the use of records from the libraries' growing collection. In the sphere of education the reading stimulation grant had much effect and 1 of the children, after reading every book the library possessed, progressed from the bottom to the top of the class.

It was later decided that teachers could be co-opted to promote reading and therefore 5 teachers were selected to receive books monthly to do with as they pleased, e.g. read aloud, or give them to the industrious. After 8 months it was found that teaching had been stimulated.

In 1958 it was decided to use that year's grant to aid adults, and a workshop in children's literature was held, introducing 500 books for later purchase.

A collection of international children's folk tales in the original languages was developed, but it was discovered that they were not used until they were interfiled with the main collection (Nash, 1971: 270-9).

Another project which utilized library personnel was the South Bay Co-operative Library System's Federal R.E.A.D. Project which provides free individual tutoring in remedial reading for children, reading-readiness classes for preschoolers and parent workshops. The project also provides in-service-training for librarians and runs a READrunner Club for reluctant readers. Thus the project is not only preventative but also curative (Gray, 1976: 43-4).

The importance of co-operation between school and public library has already been discussed in section 3.3.2.2.8. An

example of such co-operation is a book pool begun in 1939 in Vancouver, Canada, to supply the basic collections owned by each school. The expenses of the book pool are met by the School Board with the Public Library Board supplying the premises and professional services. When the Canadian school year begins, each school library receives a quota based on its enrolment to be returned at the end of the school year (Bentley, 1961: 487-8).

From the above it can be seen that if the public library is to be truly public it should not only receive public funds but should, if it is to influence attitudes towards reading, also become an integral part of the community it serves.

3.3.4 SOCIETY AT LARGE

The influence which society exercises in fostering conditions that promote the emergence of reluctant reading has been discussed in section 2.3.3. However, may positive results have been achieved in attempts to diminish the incidence of reader reluctance and there is much which could still be tried in order to foster the love of reading within the community.

The mass media, although bearing a large percentage of the responsibility for reader reluctance also constitute a major factor in combating the problem. The various media have disseminated a multitude of successful programs designed to stimulate reading interest. Moreover, the media have proved to be an extremely useful educational tool. Storytelling

courses, book festivals, booksellers and home libraries are other facets of society's efforts towards the dimunition of the incidence of reader reluctance.

3.3.4.1 **The mass media**: In sections 2.3.1.4 and 2.3.3.2 the types of problems caused by the mass media have been discussed. However, there are many authorities who feel that these problems are often only of a temporary nature and that with correct usage the appeal of the mass media to the auditory and perceptual senses has and can be a very positive force in encouraging children to read. In an age when we seem to be increasingly involved in an audio-visual world these opinions warrant careful examination.

In order to promote permanent reading interests through audio-visual methods one should, in the opinion of the literature surveyed

> "Relate school reading experience to other communication arts, particularly television, radio, motion pictures, recordings, the comics, and picture magazines. Make constructive use of the various mass media to complement and reinforce one another" (Jacobs, 1956: 23).

The media can not designed only for mass consumption. Much media material is specifically produced for instructional purposes. Many school libraries, particularly in the USA, but also in South Africa, have their own media centres which give the best possible opportunity for integrating such material into the curriculum.

A media centre is a suitable place from which to initiate

assignments. Here children can prepare projects such as graphic displays, later presenting the information to the group. If children are shown slides simultaneously with their studying of their basal readers the visual impact will tend to help them acquire the skill required for reading. Slides may also be used in order to subtly introduce a few additional words (Criscuolo, 1973: *).

Reading as an acceptable activity can be encouraged by the mass media with the aid of television commercials, posters, radio spots and newspaper advertisements. In New Haven, New Jersey, USA, the importance of reading was stressed in a "Read to succeed" campaign with the slogan "If you can't read, you're out of luck" (Criscuolo, 1973: *).

The media such as radio, comics and cinema can be used to stimulate reading. Discussions on comic characters usually stimulate a desire in children to examine books containing stories dealing with these characters. In order to introduce records and books to children a simulated radio program may be designed and if the interests of the children are known it is possible to produce such a program with a fair degree of success (Lowrie, 1962: 114; Witty, 1947: 26-7).

Many children find it easier to study if they can do this through the use of their auditory or visual senses. It is in this sphere that audio-visual equipment can be profitably used. Children with reading difficulties can be exposed to slides, cassettes and filmstrips in order to keep their "curiosity alive while the remedial teachers do their best"

(Roczniok, 1976: 28).

The reason why these children may find this type of learning easier is that many children are so used to receiving entertainment through the media that they become incapable of sitting still, a necessary requirement for listening to a story or learning. If the media can assist them in successfully acquiring these skills and thereby increasing their self-esteem it may also result in the children having a more amenable attitude towards putting a greater effort into other activities such as reading (Thomas, 1978: *).

A media project which Thomas experimented with was a group effort to create a 10-minute television instructional program or a slide presentation on a subject of the children's own choice. They were also instructed to write and tape copy intended to advertise a product. The enthusiasm proved great and although non-print media was used, the assignment relied greatly on the use of print - thus it seemed to prove that the use of the media may promote the use of print (Thomas, 1978: *).

This type of project would seem to encompass the concept that learning through non-print material is complementary to that achieved through books but must never be considered to replace book learning (Weber, 1977: 85).

An educated person is defined by Vandermeer (1961: 798) as an informed and effective citizen. To become such a citizen he maintains, a spirit of inquiry is necessary. Therefore he wonders why there should be resistance to the media.

Although there are authorities like Joseph Krutch who believe that a poor reader will never learn to read if given pictures, Vandermeer does not agree with this assumption, maintaining, that the process of learning to read is from the concrete to the abstract (Vandermeer, 1961: 798-9).

There is much which the schools may do to utilize the media to best advantage. To enable pupils to make the best use of the mass media the school library should print a list of programs, of both radio and television, which are worth viewing. These would include, if the school was in the USA, the Chicago Board of Education's weekly broadcast schedule which has among other educationally instructional programs many which are book-orientated. The Columbia Broadcasting System, USA, issues a bulletin of suggested readings related to their programs to be televised. Book reviews and dramatic presentations can be taped by the schools and stored for future listening (Peterson, 1962: 176-7).

Audio-visual material can be used to broaden the child's experience of the world around. However, it is likewise important that time must also be found in which to talk and listen to the child (Larsen, 1979: 32). As in the case of the printed word, the benefit the child gains from the media is directly related to the individual's skill in viewing. The media, although they can be used skillfully as an aid to the learning process, can never carry the major instructional load. A librarian who devotes most of his time to the acquisition and utilization of media material and

equipment has ceased to carry out her correct function (Cleary, 1972: 41-2).

A novel approach to the use of audio-visual material is postulated by Ralph, who believes that it does not diminish book reading. Rather it encourages children to consult a wider range of books than is usual when textbooks are being used. Moreover he maintains that the media lends a new image to books, introducing them as objects to consult and read for pleasure rather than things containing facts which must be learnt by heart laboriously (Ralph, 1950: 53).

There are many who are not quite so enthusiastic and feel that the media, by and large, are tailored to the needs of the average whereas a book is something personal which one is able to handle, examine to sample and, if chosen can be carried around (Reading for recreation ..., 1967: 276). Each serves its own purpose and need not fear the other. Moreover, book readers can choose their time and place and attempt to satisfy their current needs, whereas the media do not usually offer such advantages (Jenkinson, 1964: 56). It is because of this that a child sitting in front of a television set, with a book, will often cease to watch and become totally involved in reading (Nell, 1978 (b): 67).

It is uncertain how great the effect of audio-visual material is on reading, both in terms of quantity and quality. A book which is filmed or shown on television tends to increase in popularity. Although educators believe that reading is easier and more enjoyable for those who bring to

it a rich background, much of which can be acquired from the media, there is always the inherent danger that having received such knowledge effortlessly the child may be reluctant to exert the effort required for becoming a skillful reader. It is necessary for educators to become fully conversant with the media and to be able to exploit than as a method of acquiring learning experience of value (Cleary, 1972: 42).

Television, radio, the cinema, newspapers and tapes are all discussed by the authorities surveyed. As yet there appears to be no literature regarding the effects on reading of the new variety of electronic devices which are flooding the market at the time of writing, being the beginning of the 1980s, e.g. home computers, electronic games.

3.3.4.1.1 **Television**: (cf. also 2.3.3.2.1) In the beginning many who were audio-visual aficionados thought that this new medium would prove the solution to all reading problems. Much excellent material has been produced and it has proved an invaluable aid to teaching especially in smaller schools which would otherwise have been unable to offer such a variety of courses. However, in a study done to evaluate Spanish television instruction in 7 schools in Palo Alto, California, USA, it was found that although television watching caused an increased achievement in listening comprehension, this appeared to be linked with the degree of expertise which the classroom teacher who conducted the

lesson brought to the television viewing (Cleary, 1972: 37). Cleary concluded from the study that there is growing evidence that no matter how carefully notes are taken and reading done, pupils found that, unless immediate classroom discussion took place, it was difficult to retain and understand the subjects viewed. She states that the amount of learning acquired from television is in direct proportion to the prior knowledge which the viewer brings to the experience. Unless children are primed before the program, little learning will take place and the time may be spent purely on being entertained. Providing that these provisions are met, she feels that there are great advantages for learning through any communication which combines both sight and sound (Cleary, 1972: 37, 41).

Despite dire predictions about the effect of television on reading between the years 1958 - 1967, sales of books rose 700% (measured in dollars) and over 140 new bookshops came into being in the USA. The output of book titles in 1970 was double that of 1950. It would therefore seem that book reading has not been replaced but reinforced by the introduction of electronic devices (Landy, 1977: 379).

These findings are borne out by findings at the Riverside Branch of the New York Public Library, USA where the children borrowed 27,373 books during the period July 1950 - June 1951; 33,000 books during the period 1952-53 and 44,316 books during the period 1954-55 (Spiegler, 1956: 185).

Therefore it can be concluded that television must not be

regarded as an opposing activity but rather as a different activity. Television does much for book reading and a popular series is a great boost for sales of the book on which it is based (Chambers, 1969: 9).

A survey in the USA undertaken by Witty of North-western University, revealed that, although in the early days of television, viewing was a great fascination for both adults and children, enthusiasm soon waned, and a strong return to books was made. This was especially true when parents sat and watched with their children and stimulated them to read the books they saw televised. This indicates that children will read if their interest in books can be stimulated (Spiegler, 1956: 185).

Parents who sit with their children while they watch television can encourage them to read not only the books they see televised but can also reinforce what they have viewed, e.g. a feature on the Wild West can be compared to the life described in a book on the subject. Thus the child can be taught to think and television viewing can cease to be a passive activity. If the child can be persuaded that books are as interesting or more so than television he will spend more time reading and in turn will possibly influence his friends to do the same. Thus television and reading should be regarded as being compatible and not opposing activities (Shayon, 1953: 99). To illustrate this the following parable is related:

"And the people who loved books and wanted their

> children to love them did as Moses had done in the land of Egypt when he stood in the court of Pharoah. Moses cast down his rod and it became a serpent and when the wise men and sorcerers also cast down their rods and they became serpents, Moses' rod swallowed up their rods.
> The rod which the people who loved books cast down was the Written Word. The rod which the wise men and the sorcerers of television cast down was the Moving Image. And the people who loved books caused to cry out at fearful things which had come upon them, and bestirred themselves. And then the rod of the Written Word swallowed up the rod of the Moving Image, and both rods - the new rod of the Image, and the old rod of the Word - lived happily ever after" (Shayon, 1953: 100).

Various television programs have been specifically designed to encourage reading interest in children.

The Columbia Broadcasting System in the USA conducted an experiment based on their belief that enthusiasm for television can motivate children into wishing to read, altering an attitude that reading was not a particularly necessary skill nor particularly enjoyable. They issued original scripts of television dramatizations to over 2 million school children, to be read while watching the actual productions. Teachers found that the program stimulated critical thinking and that it helped to develop the reading skills of the pupils. The exact impact cannot be determined but it was found that 70% of pupils participating in Los Angeles did extra outside reading as a result of the program (To promote reading, 1978: 16).

Another television program designed to stimulate reading was Jackanory, a storytelling program produced in Britain in the 1960s and directed at 5- to 9-year olds. A careful balance

was kept between the types of story told and only good storytellers were employed. The book's illustrations, still photographs and films, were used to promote interest in the story (Home, 1969: 18-21).

The program organized a story competition in which there were over 6,000 entries. Home argues that even if the standard of the entries varied greatly, at least television had activated a child who might otherwise have been a passive viewer into making a sustained effort. She concludes that television is of benefit to children if it can stimulate them in this manner (Home, 1969: 21). Thus television attempted to stimulate both reading and the art of storytelling, aiding in the educational process.

Geller found that if a book used on the American television show Sesame Street was then used in a library story hour it generated great excitement, especially in areas where book ownership was rare (Geller, 1970: 3960-1). This is an example where library and media reinforce each other in their attempt to diminish the incidence of reader reluctance.

It would seem from the above that television, if discriminately used, can be an invaluable tool in improving reading skills and generating an interest in books.

3.3.4.1.2 Radio: The 1980s are more orientated towards television than radio and therefore radio does not play as significant a part in the life of today's child as it did in the lives of those generations who lived in the earlier

years of this century.

Programs to foster reading interest such as the Cuckoo clock house, which was produced in Canada in the post Second World War period have been organized on the radio. Libraries in Canada were forewarned as to which books were to be dramatized and information was available as to the whereabouts of the nearest mobile library. The program was art-orientated and described the world's greatest paintings and their painters (Graham, 1951: 21-3).

Dramatizations of children's books are still common on radio in the 1980s and radio still has a role to play in attempting to reduce the incidence of reader reluctance.

3.3.4.1.3 Cinema: Various research projects have been undertaken to discover if there is a positive correlation between the watching of films and reading.

Dale describes a series of experiments which took place in North America, some 40 years ago.

In an experiment by Wood and Freeman, three-quarters of the teachers involved felt that the films shown increased the quantity and quality of children's reading. Librarians also reported an increase (Dale, 1940: *).

Knowiton and Tilton found that historical films did not cause children to read more history outside school hours but did stimulate them to read more on a voluntary basis during school hours (Dale, 1940: *).

In a questionnaire put to children in Montclair Junior High

School, New Jersey, USA it was found that as many books were read as a result of a film as were read for other reasons. Lewis found a similar interrelationship between book reading and film watching. Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, USA prepared regular reading lists on books related to movies. Dale concluded that at the time there was a significant inter-stimulus between media and no basis was found for the supposition that films dull or thwart the desire to read books (Dale, 1940: *).

Some 37 years later Landy undertook research in Canada and came to the same conclusion. She lists the tendencies and trends of the reader as opposed to the non-reader, concluding that the reader tends "to be slightly more likely to attend movies" (Landy, 1977: 387).

There is no mention of the cinema having a negative influence on reading in any of the authorities surveyed.

3.3.4.1.4 <u>Newspapers</u>: A research project was undertaken in the mid-sixties to ascertain which media constituted the North American child's favourite source of information. The 1,425 children selected for the experiment listed radio, television, magazines and newspapers, in that order. It was therefore felt that it was important for newspapers to organize projects which would encourage readers, because it was considered that only in a society which has a free press can freedom be found, and to achieve this people need to be educated so that they will not try to close down a press

which attempts to propagate unpopular viewpoints (Wanted, 1965: 3711).

A method of encouraging young readers could be a visit to a newspaper publisher which can be an exciting experience and should stimulate in the children a desire to read the newspaper hot off the press. The newspaper should be taken back to the classroom and looked at section by section. Many pupils readily assume that newspapers cater purely for adult interests but will be pleased to discover that there are sections they too can enjoy (Marks, 1962: 153).

3.3.4.1.5 Tapes: Taped children's books enable the child to read and listen at the same time. This often improves reading ability and stimulates an interest in reading because it enables the child to experience the book. This is particularly so if there is the opportunity to discuss it with his peers (Larsen, 1979: 31).

It would seem from the above that the various media have much to offer as educational aids and contribute a fair amount towards diminishing the incidence of reader reluctance.

3.3.4.2 Storytelling courses: The importance of storytelling has been discussed more fully in sections 2.2.5, 3.2.1, 3.3.1 and 3.3.3.4.

Storytelling does not merely constitute the reading of a

story, but in the case of the story hour it often induces active participation. This, too, is seen to be part of the educational process by Clements and Burrell who consider that participation, such as laughter, is part of the learning process (An interview ..., 1973: 688) A method of encouraging this participation is for the storyteller to go on his knees, muse poetically or break into song, thus transforming the library into a magic place. These free reading sessions are often the only time some children have to socialize with their peers (Gray, 1979: 17; An interview ..., 1973: 685).

Libraries have been noted in the sections mentioned above to have taken it upon themselves to run courses on the subject of storytelling. However, it is not only libraries which offer such courses but also many North American universities, such as specific campuses of the University of California. They do this because they believe that storytelling will help stimulate children's interest and in turn their love for reading (Adams, 1973: 153).

3.3.4.3 **Book festivals**: The community can attempt to diminish the incidence of reader reluctance by arranging book festivals which can be of one or more days' duration. Ample time should be allowed for leisurely viewing. All the children, parents and neighbours should be invited to participate, either as helpers or purchasers, or both. Such a fair requires a great deal of planning. It should take place

in an area large enough to accommodate the books attractively, thereby ensuring that none of the browsers will be jostled and crowded (Chambers, 1973: 104-5).

The sale of books can be arranged at such a fair. This is claimed to be especially successful if the fair is held near Christmas. If in addition some authors or illustrators can be invited it will add glamour to the occasion, further contributing to the appeal among children (Cleary, 1972: 128).

An example of a book festival is one described by Brian Alderson, who believes that if there are books in the classroom and also a school library these will cause children to turn to them naturally for recreation and for help in their day-to-day work. A book festival was held accompanied by an exhibition and talks. Later the children reviewed the books and the festival. It was found that it helped to take library work out of the curriculum, placing it firmly in the lives and homes of the pupils (Alderson, 1963: 480-2).

Library 21 was a book fair on a much larger scale, taking place at the Seattle World Fair, Washington, USA. It aimed to suggest by its fun, wonder and satisfaction the delights which come through reading. There were book suggestions, foreign books, selected films and colourful furnishings. Children's librarians were selected for a training project, so that they could man the fair (Batchelder, 1962: 1964-5).

It would seem that society can organize book festivals, both small and large, in an effort to combat reader reluctance on the part of its citizens, both young and old.

3.3.4.4 **Booksellers**: At a conference in the thirties it was concluded that booksellers must have staff trained to select books and to work with children (Milam, 1932: 50). This is a conclusion with which Aidan Chambers in the late sixties is still in full agreement. Moreover, he believes that it would not be out of keeping if public libraries, especially in small towns without booksellers, acted as bookselling agencies. He feels that this would benefit both the library and the community in that the library would be actively encouraging the purchasing and reading of quality literature and the public would receive the benefit of professional advice when selecting their purchases (Chambers, 1969: 132). It is also advised that bookshops should have more inviting entrances and simplify the task of purchasers by improved signposting of their stock (Mann, 1971: 27).

3.3.4.5 **Home libraries in Japan**: The Japanese have established libraries for children in private homes. They are of varying sizes and efficiency but their activities usually include a story hour. They have limited opening hours, sometimes as little as 1 afternoon per week. There is no publicity except for word of mouth. They have been established in the hope that they will build up pleasure for reading in children and that eventually this may help in the development of public libraries in Japan (Matsuoka, 1970: 159-64, 168).

It would appear that society has a definite role to play, both on a small and a large scale, in the prevention of reader reluctance. Moreover, although the previous chapters indicated that the incidence of reader reluctance is very large, there are apparently innumerable methods whereby children may be prevented from swelling this number.

CHAPTER 4

REMEDIAL ACTION FOR CURING THE INCIDENCE OF RELUCTANT READING AMONG CHILDREN

The preceding chapter has much information gleaned from the literature on action designed as precautionary measures to prevent the emergence of reluctant reading. Many of these projects, although intended to attract the younger reader, can equally successfully be used as remedies for those children who have already decided that reading is an activity of no interest or pleasure to them. Other projects are more specifically designed for the older child, among whose ranks the confirmed reluctant reader will generally be found.

The reason for this is that although many precautions have been taken (such as those detailed in the previous chapter) to prevent the incidence of reluctant reading among children, there are still a great number who have never come into contact with such programs, or have been unaffected by them. Much has been attempted to lure such reluctant readers back into the fold and to illustrate to them that reading is a worthwhile activity. This chapter will attempt to examine some of these projects.

4.1 THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD

As in the case of the 2 preceding chapters the first issue to be examined will be what has been done in regard to the individual reluctant reader. This, in essence, relates to means of individual guidance.

4.1.1 INDIVIDUAL GUIDANCE

Many authorities go so far as to define the functionally illiterate as one who can read, but never does so as a leisure activity. Although this would seem to be a more extreme definition than that of Landy's and Kesting's (cf. 2.1.7 and 2.3.1.2), what is generally agreed is that this problem does not begin in adulthood. Based on numerous investigations, 11% to 20% of all pupils in the USA, (i.e. approximately 5.5 to 10 million) mentally normal children of schoolgoing age are estimated to be reluctant readers. It is often more difficult to guide and motivate such pupils than children suffering from reading handicaps (Cleary, 1972: 155-6).

Individual guidance, Cleary advises, should emanate from a person-to-person discussion, preferably commencing with a consideration of the librarians personal interests, leading up to an inquiry relating to those of the child. When a field of possible interest has been ascertained, a suitable variety of material can be supplied to meet this need. Later an attempt can be made to guide the child into a wider expanse of interest (Cleary, 1972: 157).

Much attention has been paid by educationalists to the child with reading problems and the child who is culturally deprived. As a result of this, it often happens that the most neglected child in the library is the gifted reader. Despite the positive correlation between intelligence and reading ability, it has been found that many gifted children do not reach adequate maturity levels in reading or develop reading interests and habits commensurate with their levels of intelligence (Cleary, 1972: 155).

Although having apparently a state of self-sufficiency, the gifted child still requires individual guidance if he is to reach his full potential. Unless the school library collection is sufficient for his needs, he may gradually lose interest in reading. Even if he has the motivation he still needs advice as to the appropriate materials and usually has a desire to discuss the contents of his reading with the librarian. A thorough grounding as to the use of the library books and the skills to interpret, synthesize and assimilate the contents of his reading matter is as necessary for him as for any other reader. Cleary concludes:

> "Although the correlation between intelligence and reading ability is positive, many gifted pupils do not reach real maturity in reading or establish productive reading interests and habits" (Cleary, 1972: 155).

4.2 **PARENTAL AND HOME INFLUENCES** (cf. also 3.2)

It has already been argued that parents can play a decisive role in providing the stimulation and environment necessary

if the child is to develop an enthusiasm for the acquiring of the skill of reading and for the activity itself. An authority like Williams believes that

> "parents still count as a factor in a child's education ...for good or ill, more than school, or any material advantages" (Williams, 1971: 7-8).

Many reluctant readers have parents who are unaware of the importance of providing such facets in the child's upbringing and, even if they are aware, have no knowledge of the manner in which such a task can be undertaken. Therefore it would seem important to provide parents with an understanding of the educational process - a need which is no less important in the case of the parents of reluctant readers than it is for parents of pre-school and early readers. One thing which is very much within the parental scope is the creation of an environment conducive to reading.

4.2.1 **READING ENVIRONMENT** (cf. also 3.2.8, 3.2.11 and 3.2.14)

This topic has been dealt with fairly extensively in previous sections. Reluctant readers are usually older children who tend not to take kindly to parentally enforced ideas. It is therefore advisable that such children should be encouraged to organize times convenient to themselves for parents to read to them and also that they should be allowed to choose what the parent should read at these times. If such freedom of choice is denied, it is possible that parents,

despite the best intentions of creating a reading environment, may eventually lose all communication with their children (Williams, 1971: 88).

4.3 COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

It would seem that although in Chapter 3 the parents and community could fulfil an equally powerful role in the prevention of the incidence of reluctant reading and in the cure of reluctant readers it is the community who shoulder the bulk of the burden, because it tends to be more informed and less emotionally involved. Moreover, non-parental advice is often more easily accepted by older children.

The community's influence is exercised through its institutions (e.g. the school and the public library), through projects which are organized under its auspices, and through the books which are disseminated in its midst.

4.3.1 SCHOOL

It is here that the child, especially at the secondary school level, usually spends the largest amount of time other than at home. Therefore it is normally easiest to attempt to communicate with him in the school environment. This is one of the main reasons why various projects have been attempted within the walls of the school. Furthermore, it is here that an awareness of the importance of such projects is generated, and the negative consequences of reluctant reading are evinced.

It is usually at school that the child progresses to a level of creative literacy (cf. 2.3.1.2), his first language being taught not only by his language teacher per se, but ideally throughout the school curriculum. The school is in the position to reinforce the pupil's reading skill as he progresses from standard to standard. Various methods for encouraging the promotion of reading interests, such as the replacing of textbooks and discussion programs, can be employed.

The school library, too, has an important role to play in the attempt to decrease the incidence of reluctant readers. It is here that the reluctant reader will be guided, along with his peers, towards books which he may enjoy. It would therefore seem important that he can be persuaded to enter the library voluntarily and with a feeling of pleasurable anticipation (cf. also 3.3.2.1).

4.3.1.1 **Division of responsibility for the teaching of English**: Although the teaching of English as a first language for the child at school and at home is the primary responsibility of the English teacher, it should, however, be the secondary responsibility of all other subject teachers. If the pupil discovers that reading and writing are of equal importance to his learning of all subjects (i.e. not only of English), he will gradually come to the realization that they are no more unnatural to his existence than walking or talking. It is necessary to dispel the illusion that reading and writing are exclusive to the English

lesson and have no part to play in a person's general lifestyle (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 26).

4.3.1.2 **Replacing textbooks**: The replacing of textbooks is a fundamental element of the Fader plan, as described in section 4.3.1.1. It is postulated that

> "Generations of students, nurtured solely on anthologized classics, have become the parents of children who, like their parents, lack the reading habit because the typical school program neither stimulates nor breeds a desire to read in the average student" (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 39).

Textbooks and books used for the study of literature by school pupils usually tend to have a format and content which does not appeal to modern youth. It thus becomes an easy decision to associate reading with books of this kind and, therefore, to decide not to indulge in such an activity during leisure hours.

The replacement of textbooks with paperbacks, magazines and newspapers should go a long way towards combating this problem. The quality text previously employed may teach the pupil discrimination, but not necessarily the desire to read for its own sake. No hardcover book can be thrust into a pocket, taken everywhere and thus made part of living. Such books usually receive minimal attention because they offer no form of companionship. What is of primary importance is "the quality of supervised reading ..." accomplished (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 39).

The need to possess is very strong in many children and

paperbacks and magazines may satisfy this need and thereby encourage reading. They are "an invitation to possession and casual reading" (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 39). It was found at the Maxey School for Rehabilitation, USA that boys who ran away often leaving everything behind, made an exception and took with them paperbacks which were in their possession at the time. This need to possess resulted in 1 delinquent, having been home for the weekend, rushing in with the paperback he had bought. He had, after being subject to the program, found it worth his time and money to buy books. Even if he had stolen them it would have been a first time for books (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 41, 51) (cf. also 3.2.11). English teachers involved in the Fader program, used newspapers at least 3 times per week as opposed to the conventional textbooks. They found that they were welcomed and that they captured pupils' attention. Newspapers represented home, a place where learning was voluntary, as opposed to the school environment (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 68). As newspaper reading is normally a first step of importance in the path towards literacy, pupil interest proved to be of paramount importance in dealing with reluctant readers. It must, however, be remembered, states Fader and McNeil, that the newspaper is but a tool and its success is still dependent on the teacher's ability to use it productively. In selecting newspapers for use in such a program a local newspaper was found to be the most successful because pupils could relate directly to its contents.

To prevent the novelty of newspaper usage wearing off, it was found that it was best to alternate with magazines. Magazines have the added impact of visual appeal. It is recommended that whatever magazines are decided upon, the amount of each magazine ordered should be equal to the number of pupils in the school's largest class.

The methods used in the teaching of these novel materials must alter somewhat from those previously employed, otherwise the children may consider themselves to have been deceived and the paperbacks, newspapers and magazines will represent the same frustrations and unhappiness to them as did the more conventional textbooks (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 39-45).

A word of caution is sounded by Baur, who notes that it has never been proved that innovations in reading instruction, such as the Fader plan, have been successful owiing to either the soundness of the technique or to the enthusiasm of teachers and pupils excited by the novelty of the program. However, research has shown that there is a correlation between effective reading instruction and an adequate library facility in the school building which must include a good staff and a wide variety of material (Baur, 1967: 3119).The latter is also part of the Fader plan and more will be written about this in section 4.3.2.1.2.

4.3.1.3 <u>Teaching 'reading' to children in high school</u>: The authorities advise not only a rethink in regard to the type

of material used in the teaching of English but they also advise that there is a need for the teaching of reading skills to continue throughout secondary school. American universities have found it necessary to develop a 'Freshman's English course', because it was discovered that the students did not have the reading skills necessary for coping with university requirements (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 24-5).

By the time a child becomes a high school pupil limited reading skills may well have caused him to become a reluctant reader. Even at this stage there is no reason why this deficiency may not be remedied and therefore Cleary states that it is important that their teaching of reading should not be discontinued in secondary school. Even if the basic skill has been learned the utilization of words and ideas can be taught even at the high school level. There are also other skills such as the correct use of books for informational purposes to be learned. If reading difficulties are removed it is quite possible that the pupil may discover for the first time the joy of reading and decide that it is an activity worthy of his time and attention (Cleary, 1972: 18-9).

If Kesting's definition of literacy (cf. 2.3.1.2) is accepted then Cleary's plan for the teaching of advanced reading skills in secondary school is valid because it is only at this level that creative literacy is reached.

4.3.1.4 **Projects in group guidance**: Numerous ideas have been suggested which schools could implement in order to foster reading interest in its pupils. One of these is a group guidance program undertaken by a librarian during the school year 1967-8 with 35 pupils who lived in rural USA. They were of average I.Q., many had working mothers and all came from low income homes. With a few exceptions they placed reading last on their list of leisure activities.

The librarian, who was new to the school, discovered that although they dutifully changed books after individual help, they did not appear to enjoy their reading. It was then that he realized that the pupils had no reading background and that the settings of the books were generally foreign to them. He decided to alter his original plan which was to have a program of individual guidance, and instead attempted to stimulate the interest of the group. To do this he employed various devices intended to make reading an active rather than a passive activity. These included films, informal talks and the linking of the myths and legends to television advertising. Active participation was encouraged, creative dramatics becoming a popular activity.

At the end of the year it was found that 46% of the group ranked reading as their first or second leisure-time preference, and 87% reported that they enjoyed the library period. Book circulation doubled month by month and reading accuracy and speed increased, thus their exciting adventure with books had altered their reading habits and attitudes.

It would therefore seem that "reluctant readers can be lured to read; they cannot be driven" (Cleary, 1972: 160).

Ellen Smith, speaking at one of a series of lectures on the importance of reading at the Summer School held through the auspices of the University of Cape Town's department of extra-mural studies in 1979, recommended that teachers read aloud (cf. also 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 3.2.6 and 3.3.2.2.5) to their pupils as a means of introducing reluctant readers to books through listening.

Discussion constitutes a method of employing indirect action in an attempt to lure the reluctant reader. Due regard is given to a question or remark made by a child, and eventually books may be introduced to check on facts needed to arbitrate between two or more divergent or contradictory opinions. Children usually encourage each other by their enthusiasm and it will become evident that with the necessary skills in book use all may participate in this "arena of ideas". Thus the desire to know and to be part of a group may inspire the reluctant reader (Lubway, 1962: 121-2).

Discussion can sometimes draw to the attention of the reluctant reader the fact that answers to personal problems, as well as facts, can be found between the covers of books (Lubway, 1962: 122-4).

It is not important which method is employed. What would seem to be of importance is that the entire staff of the school should encourage an interest in reading.

4.3.1.5 **School library**: (cf. also 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.1.2) The school library needs to attract the reluctant reader on a voluntary basis before it can be deemed to have fulfilled its function. It is not sufficient for the library to supply the books required for the literary needs of the pupils and to promote reading to those who willingly participate in its program. It is also responsible for reaching out to those who only use the library if the curriculum so dictates, so that the attitudes of these pupils can be altered, enabling them to perceive the virtues of reading.

The type of projects suggested in section 3.3.2.1.2.3 were essentially designed to prevent the occurrence of reluctant reading. Many of these projects could be suitably adapted so that they may appeal to the reluctant reader who is generally an older child. The projects advocated below are those which seem more specifically designed to remedy rather than prevent reluctant reading. As in previous sections the prominence given to each is dependent only upon the amount of information available and reflects no value judgment.

4.3.1.5.1 **Meeting place**: Writing about American conditions in the late 1960s,Baur was much influenced in her ideas by the recent events in her country where summer heat had ignited street violence. She was an admirer of Fader and McNeil and had instituted a system in her own school library which, with the exception of easier borrowing, was identical to the model which her mentors advocated. Thus she was aware that

these methods purported to remedy reluctance in reading and had been successful in curing social maladjustment and in combating social problems in general (cf. also 3.3.3.4.7). In the light of this background it is not surprising that she considers that 1 of the roles of the school library is to act as a meeting place. She feels that in an attempt to maintain communication with children with an inclination towards militancy (in this case blacks), they should be allowed to gather in the library after school hours (Baur, 1967, 3120). She maintains that, unless American black youths are allowed to express their opinions freely, intellectual militants will join those seeking the good life as portrayed on television, and together they will make the riots of 1967 seem like a Sunday School picnic. In 1967 only the latter participated but she fears that such will not be the case in the future (Baur, 1967: 3121). If the libraries co-operate with their pupils as advised by Baur, it is hoped that a dual purpose will be served. The library will become a familiar place to many who had previously never known it and may thus be stimulated to use it for purposes other than political gatherings. Moreover, newly awakened interest in books born within a climate of adult understanding may well act as a diffusion agent in respect of the violent undercurrent prevalent in the young community.

4.3.1.5.2 <u>An experiment in Kanoscha , Wisconsin, USA</u>: It was realized that a basic problem is to sustain the child's

interest while he perfects his skill in reading. This is a more fundamental issue than that discussed in the previous section (4.3.1.5.1), being timeless and having validity irrespective of where such an experiment is copied. Each child was given a reading and comprehension test and then began to read on the level the tests placed him, from a selection of books graded according to various established lists.

The child also received a standard for outside reading as a measure of achievement. This too was done on a point system so as to encourage him to read more books that needed practice. No pupil received an A for English without an A for outside reading. To make written book reports easy and pleasant a mimeographed outline was given.

Pupils approved of the program and some who had not enjoyed reading previously now found it fun. Many made great gains in reading and the library's circulation went up by 20%. It was concluded that it was a program worth trying (Monsigian 1957: 12-3, 16).

It would seem apparent that the school can be responsible for the implementation of a great variety of programs which may decrease the incidence of reluctant readers.

4.3.2 **PUBLIC LIBRARY**

In section 3.3.3 the role played by the public library in preventing the development of children into reluctant readers was examined. The public library's task of curing

children who have become firmly established reluctant readers is obviously far more difficult, as visits to the public library are by and large voluntary.

Many factors influence the child's willingness to visit the library, not the least of which is the personality of the public librarian (Roczniok, 1976: 27).

It would seem that the role of the public librarian in attempting to cure the reluctant readers with whom he comes into contact is of great importance because he may prove to be the 'last-ditch stand', school librarians having been associated with everything the child dislikes (Dunkle, 1974: 244). Hopefully, comments Wilson, he will be outside the teacher-pupil conflict and because he is not a teacher will not be directly associated with discipline (Ward & Wilson, 1978: 23). He should, therefore, attempt to get to know the child and overcome unpleasant associations.

The public library competes with the media for its share of leisure-time and therefore it would appear necessary for it to up-date its image if it wants to attract readers. This it can do by incorporating materials such as comics and paperbacks into its book stock.

It is also necessary for the public library to broaden its services so as to establish contact with the reluctant reader who would normally be unaware of what the library has to offer.

4.3.2.1 **Comics and paperbacks**: Although the range of materials which can be introduced into the modern public library is extensive and includes a multitude of audio-visual aids, it is the introduction of comics and paperbacks which appear to have excited the most heated discussions.

4.3.2.1.1 **Comics**: It is suggested that libraries have an essentially dual role to play in the community, viz. to provide a place to study for those who have nowhere to go and to attract readers and establish sustained reading habits. If comics can attract children who later look for other material, it would seem that they are entitled to a place in the library (Jones, 1977: 417).

It is argued that comics should not be frowned upon because children tend to read them whether permitted to or not, and that this act of apparent defiance may contribute towards comic-reading becoming a permanent habit. A positive step - as has been suggested - would be to stock Tintin, a French series written in comic form by Herge and obtainable in translation. The stories are long, the language good, the presentation is visually satisfying, and the plots credible. The original French edition can be kept side by side with the English edition which may encourage some to take an initial interest in, or improve a lack of familiarity with a second language. They will not prevent children from reading more conventional comics, but will provide a standard by which they can be judged instead (Chambers, 1969: 122-3).

Comics in general should not be forbidden to children. Parents should rather offer an alternative such as joining a library. Although it is generally acknowledged that comics tend to develop lazy reading behaviour, it is also true that they can help teach concentration. Their ease in handling is due to the illustrations and therefore books which are simple to read should also be supplied. If children read books there should not be any need to be worried about their reading of comics. It has been conceded, however, that excessive comic reading may point to a disturbance in the child's personality: therefore it is important that the root of the problem be sought rather than wasting energy on an unnecessary condemnation of comics, per se. One teacher decided to find out what might be of value in comics. His discovery was that children generally found that, after having looked at a surfeit of comics there was a monotonous repetition in this material. As a result, they tended to return to books (Brady, 1950: 667).

Broadly speaking there are 2 types of comics, viz. those with themes of violence and terror and those which are designed to please and amuse. It is important that this distinction be borne in mind, and that it is better to teach children to be selective than to attempt preventing them from reading comics at all (Burton, 1956: 95-7).

The New Britain Library, Connecticut, USA, acquired a small range of comics. This resulted in donations pouring in from children, teenagers and adults who were pleased to contri-

bute and felt more involved with the library as a result. Processing was kept down to a minimum, just an accession number being recorded. No fines or overdues were instituted but children were requested to borrow only 3 at a time. They were shelved next to high interest material, so as to encourage transition. The presence of the comics was advertised, so as to attract reluctant readers, 2 television stations announced the innovation in their news broadcasts. Thus Goodgion concluded that the reading of comics cannot be condemned if it can convince children that reading is an activity which has something to offer them. Moreover, if children come to the library seeking comics

> "the library can build a reputation as a reliable source, then the children will continue to return as they mature and their reading and informational needs change" (Goodgion, 1977: 38).

She does, however, emphasize that this system will not work for all, but only for some (Goodgion, 1977: 38).

Another experiment is described by Bakjian in which comic characters were used to stimulate reading. At a junior high school in the USA it was decided that as comics were here to stay, they might as well be put to good use. After polling the children it was found that the average comic reader was also a reader of books, and that only 4% preferred comics to books.

A section of a shelf was put aside for each comic character (e.g. Napoleon (the dog) carried all books on dogs), posters of these characters being used with great success.

The basic principle followed was that growth requires breadth, and although the reading of dog stories may not have stimulated growth, they did stimulate further reading. This seemed a step in the right direction. Moreover, it was found that children were often ready for broader reading, but lacked the ability to select. Through these favourite comic characters they established an interest and a sense of direction (Bakjian, 1945: 291-2).

4.3.2.1.2 **Paperbacks**: (cf. also 4.3.1.2) It should be remembered that reading should not be equated with the reading of hardcover books for there are children who read but do not read such books at all (McClellan, 1977: 44).
Paperbacks have revolutionized the world of books and it is therefore necessary for libraries to investigate their possibilities. One advantage of paperbacks is economics as their processing is not as expensive as for hardcover books. Despite fears to the contrary, their loss does not appear to be greater, and although many think they have no lasting power, it has been found that the glue used on them is often superior to the sewing on the hardbacks. A further cogent argument is that "children prefer topic relevance to lifetime bindings" (Larrick, 1975: 22). Fader and McNeil discovered that because their pupils regarded paperbacks as something of value they treated them accordingly and therefore the life expectancy of these paperbacks appeared endless. There are many librarians who do not share these

opinions, however, and deplore the replacement cost which will come from broken paperbacks. What should however be beyond discussion is that shelves of unused books are a greater waste of money (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 46).

If libraries wish to attract reluctant readers it would seem that they have a need for paperbacks as part of their stock. It has been found that poor readers prefer paperbacks whatever their contents because hardcover books are often identified with textbooks and failure (cf. also 2.1.6). Many so-called poor readers will pick up a paperback at a cafe if it has a colourful cover (Baur, 1967: 3119). Another reason for the popularity of paperbacks is that they give the illusion of being shorter (Coil, 1978: 35).

In an address to the School Library Association Lorna V. Paulin stated that, if the aim of libraries was to attract young people, they must cater for a wide range of interests. It is here that the paperback comes into its own. She believes that an attractive display of paperbacks will be the deciding factor as to whether or not the public libraries will be used. Thousands of hardcover books tend to be intimidating or otherwise forbidding (cf. also 2.1.6). Therefore, to put children at ease, the paperbacks should be placed near the entrance of the library, preferably with their covers and not their spines showing (Paulin, 1967: 27).

Paperbacks in cartoon form can be used as transitional material along with magazines, joke and riddle books. They

are easy to digest and allow reluctant readers to become accustomed to the paperback format. After that these readers can be moved on to paperbacks associated with the popular media. Even hardcover books about popular personalities, such as the Osmonds, Evil Knievel, sports heroes or Alfred Hitchcock, can be quite effective as transitional material. The comic format has been used successfully for providing factual material on such subjects as drugs and nutrition. There seem to be no reason why this format, in conjunction with that of the paperback cannot do the same for libraries (Goodgion, 1977: 39).

As the use of paperbacks is as pertinent to the school library as to the public library, it would seem that it would not be out of place to review Fader and McNeil's views on the subject here. They believe it to be false economy to shelve books with their spines showing when we live in a visual world of television and movies. Instead, books should be shelved as enticingly as they are in bookshops, where the necessity to sell is recognized (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 54-7).

They describe the manner in which a library of paperbacks and magazines were selected and tried. Many boys who previously had read only cartoon books gradually developed a liking for books of a serious nature which they had previously ignored in hardcover (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 49-51, 54-5).

They suggested that at the beginning of the school year each

child should be given a paperback which can be traded twice weekly for any other book he wants from the library (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 48) (cf. also 4.3.1.5.1).

An experiment based on the Fader plan was described by Baur. In addition to paperbacks, which were displayed on drugstore-type racks, the library in which she worked received 500 to 1,000 magazines every 4 to 6 weeks. Pupils were notified about them and could borrow them 2 at a time. The only way this experiment differed from Fader's was that it simplified the loan system. Fader (Fader & McNeil, 1969: 48) insisted that pupils must return a book in order to borrow another one, but Baur felt that this would restrict children to 1 book at a time, and therefore introduced an easy renewal system and easily accepted excuses for late returning of book. She found that the paperbacks on the racks circulated 4 times more often than if they were inter-shelved with the hardcover books, and that the paperback copy of a book was always taken in preference to the hardcover one. Moreover, established readers read even more with paperbacks, while non-readers slowly began to read. They proved an effective means of breaking down reading barriers caused as a result of the fact that many found hardcover books formidable (Baur, 1967: 3119-20).

Libraries have established paperback projects, such as 1 in Berkeley, California, USA. In this project a bus was used as a summer library, housing 43,000 volumes racked in drugstore style (Luring the non-reader, 1968: 2072).

Opportunities should be found for bringing children and paperbacks together. On 1 such successful occasion, Nancy Larrick gave away paperbacks on Halloween instead of candy (Larrick, 1975: 21).

Various surveys have been conducted as a means of establishing the educational usefulness of paperbacks. The first comprehensive survey on paperbacks, undertaken by the New Jersey Department of Education, USA in 1964 demonstrated that when young readers and paperbacks are brought together great strides are made in reading (Coil, 1978: 35).

It was observed by Larrick that

> "More paperbacks in the school library resulted in more library books being read. Using more paperbacks in the classroom reading instruction led to more positive attitudes towards reading on the part of children and teachers and led to greater progress in reading ...68.5% said paperbacks increased their interest in schoolwork, especially reading" (Larrick, 1975: 21).

Interviewing 11,197 pupils in secondary school representing a cross-section of the population (i.e. economically, socially and ethnically speaking) McKenzie of California State University, USA, found that of the 50 popular book titles chosen all were paperbacks. Of these, 36 had either been televised or made into films, thus demonstrating the power of the media and indicating that creative librarians should use the media to try to stimulate reading (Coil, 1978: 35-6).

From the findings of Baur and those described by Coil it would appear evident that "by the test of child-appeal, the

paperback rates far above the hardcover book" (Larrick, 1975: 22).

Oddly enough, it has been observed that the library which lends paperbacks usually reports an increased use of hardcover books (Larrick, 1975: 22).

It would appear that the introduction of unconventional material into the library, has beneficial rather than delatorious effects.

4.3.2.2. Broadening the library service: If the public library hopes to entice reluctant readers to cross its threshold it seems necessary for it to offer its services beyond its portals. Otherwise, with few exceptions, the only members of the community with whom it will probably come into contact are those who are already converted to the idea of reading.

One of the simplest methods for a library to attract borrowers is to advertise the fact that it offers a free service to the public (An interview ..., 1973: 690).

A number of minor projects have been suggested as possible remedies to the problem of the reluctant reader. It would perhaps be of value to enumerate a few which might fairly easily be copied. One such activity is the organization of a treasure hunt with clues to be found in the card catalogue, thus developing the child's skill in its use. Another is a 'mystery author' bulletin board on which a picture of the author and a title of 1 of his books are placed. Children

have to supply the name of the author and the title of another of his books, bookmarks making suitable prizes. The bulletin board may be used for a crossword puzzle with clues derived from a small range of books. Children complete the puzzle or undertake to make their own. For the younger child a jigsaw puzzle made from the cover of a book may stimulate interest in the book itself. Library skills may be taught by means of a quiz to be answered with reference to the non-fiction stock. At Erickson School in Tucson, Arizona, USA a board game is played in which players may move if an answer to a literary question is known. In the audio-visual field it is suggested that children should tape stories in the hope that their enjoyment at hearing their own voices may stimulate them to read. Another such idea is that a micro-film of a book can be produced by the children and stored in the school collection (Polette & Hamlin, 1975: 57-8, 70-3). Many libraries have attempted larger and more complicated projects in order to stimulate an interest in reading in children.

One such project is that initiated by Cleveland Public Library, USA which decided that once children could be induced to come to the library, it would perhaps be possible to persuade them subtly to read. This idea inspired the establishment of a library in Hough Ghetto, a poor, non-book-orientated area in Cleveland, which was so different from any child's preconception of what a library could be that it was hoped that curiosity would entice even reluctant readers

to pay a visit, the borrowing of books becoming the end reward of a self-satisfying and stimulating experience (Luring the non-reader, 1968: 2037).

Reluctant readers may have been influenced not only by a lack of interest in reading, but also by a lack of skill. There is evidence (cf. also 2.1.1) that difficulty in reading may diminish a child's ability to derive pleasure from reading. Working on this assumption the Farmingdale Public Library, USA, hired a remedial teaching consultant for the purpose of initiating a reading program for poor readers. Children were accepted for the course only if their parents were prepared to attend sessions, it having been decided that a supportive parental attitude was a vital element if the child was to succeed in overcoming his reading problems (Luring the non-reader, 1968: 2071-2).

In order to improve reading skills it has been suggested in Nigeria that a mini-course in speed-reading should be established and space allocated for such a project in public libraries. Such an activity could convert many who regard libraries as study halls into becoming avid readers for pleasure and transform reading into an activity which is no longer laborious and without pleasure (Aradeon, 1974: 51). This suggestion is no less valid if applied to other countries in the world where formal education may have been available for a longer period than it has been in countries on the African continent, such as in Nigeria.

Libraries may offer services which go beyond the "habitually

narrow definition of information" (Adams, 1973: 154). It is anticipated that if the community comes to recognize the library as a source of useful information for daily life its members may return for educational or recreational reasons. An example of this type of service is the guide to the city, designed especially for boys and girls, issued by the Islington Library in London. This guide includes information not only about cultural institutions such as museums, but also about popular matters (e.g. where to swim and where free holiday shows are available) (Adams, 1973: 154).

An experiment was carried out in Scandinavia in order to increase adult interest in children's reading, increase children's interest in quality books, to integrate books and reading into everyday activities, to stimulate children so that they would write and narrate and lastly to take into consideration children not used to reading such as immigrants and those with handicaps.

The scheme began with 1,000 copies of each of 100 titles, divided into packages, distributed to youth and children's organizations on application. It was hoped that children would become critical of the contents of comics and magazines and become familiar with libraries and thus be motivated to use them. Furthermore, large numbers of adults gained the opportunity of becoming involved with children's reading and this could result in the culture of the children being extended (Hillman, 1976: 77-80).

The above are but a few suggestions, found in the autho-

rities surveyed, as to methods whereby public libraries can attract readers.

4.3.3 **COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

Several projects undertaken by both individuals and groups have been designed to attract and convert the reluctant reader. All the projects described in this section have been designed in an attempt at creating an atmosphere in which reading is attractive and acceptable and emphasizing the fact that reading is a worthwhile activity.

4.3.3.1 **Children's caravan**: Many children in this part of the twentieth century are exposed to the mass media long before they are exposed to books, and it is only if book reading can evoke the same magical world that it can be expected to compete. A parent who understands this fact can create such a world for his child and so can librarians. The former often cuddles his child while he reads to him, whereas the latter may provide a 'magic' carpet or a lighted candle in order to create an atmosphere conducive to listening to storytelling. But for many children there is no association between books and reading and a magical environment. The dull, everyday settings in which they encounter books will not assist in the battle to involve them with books (Poignand & Mann, 1967: 860).

A philanthropic film producer, Morton Schindel, decided to attempt to rectify in some measure this deprivation and to

perhaps counterbalance the world of unreality found in the mass media. He therefore established an opulent mobile theatre for films in an ex-school bus. The children were given paperback copies of the stories they saw on film. For many this was the first book they had ever owned. A course in arts and crafts was also included in the summer.

Later with government sponsorship the 'theatre' catered for a wider audience. Frequent visits were necessary otherwise the project was destined to develop into merely a form of entertainment.

A performance was also given for parents during which the films were reshown and discussed, thereby giving parents an understanding as to how to read to their children. As a further attendance incentive an adult film was shown after the discussion (Poignand & Mann, 1967: 860-2).

4.3.3.2 **International Telephone and Telegraph Company advertisements**: The responsibility, both of educating parents as to the importance of encouraging their children to read and of diminishing the incidence of reluctant readers in the population, is one which cannot be shouldered by the schools and the public libraries alone. In this case, commerce, aware of the enormous financial cost to the country of the functionally illiterate (a state into which many reluctant readers sink) decide to finance an advertising campaign designed to make people aware that reading, irrespective of quality, was of value. Their advertisement read:

> "He's not exactly reading Shakespeare, but at least he's reading. Hamlet just won't turn him on, Dr. Fu Manchu will. And to a guy who never read a book before in his life - any book - it's a start" (Luring the non-reader, 1968: 2072).

4.3.3.3 **A federal program**: Many people who would not normally visit the library might do so if the library made provision for an activity which interested them free of charge. In Venice, Los Angeles, USA an art project was run at which speakers were invited to address the children. It was hoped that children would become accustomed to borrowing the books during the course and would then continue to avail themselves of the libraries resources (Luring the non-reader, 1968: 2072-3).

4.3.3.4 **Delinquent storytellers**: Although the training of delinquents as storytellers would seem to be an unusual concept it is completely in line with a policy of juvenile rehabilitation which should be the purpose of any society vis-a-vis its youthful offenders, success having been achieved in the field of the handicapped and the geriatric. It should prove mutually beneficial to both storyteller and listener. The former gains financially , his self-esteem is boosted and his self-education and integration back into society are facilitated. The latter listens to stories told by someone whose age and perhaps background is not that dissimilar to his own (Adams, 1973: 153).

4.3.3.5 **Meeting the author**: The atmosphere surrounding books and authors may well seem rather remote from the average lifestyle of a child. Therefore, if it could be observed that authors are no different from other human beings and often find writing no easier an undertaking than the child does reading, it may remove some of the strangeness from reading books. Moreover, the excitement of meeting and speaking to someone who had been merely a name on a book cover may generate an excitement and curiosity to know more about the writing activity of such a person. It was hoped that "with the breaking of bread would come the breaking down of the barriers which are often found between children and books" (Rabwin , 1957: 2677).

Meetings between author and children are usually beneficial to both. Children, as mentioned previously, are usually likely to want to read a book written by someone with whom they have had personal contact. It also affords the author the opportunity of meeting his public and assessing its needs, often providing a welcome relief from, what is for many, the loneliness of writing (Chambers, 1973: 113-4).

An example of such functions was that arranged by parents in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, USA who have successfully organized "meet the author" luncheons over a period of several years. The number attending these luncheons has grown, thus giving evidence of the fact that children have a latent interest in reading if this is aroused and directed. Initially the luncheons consisted of short talks by the

authors, but later the introduction of someone reading such writers as Ogden Nash became a success, resulting in the antipathy towards verse being broken down by hearty laughter. Many reluctant readers now read and have swapped passive entertainment for creativity and imagination.
A workshop was established in order to instruct other communities as to the methods of establishing their own "meet the author luncheons" (Rabwin , 1957, 2676-7).

It would seem that the range of projects which can be undertaken by the community is limitless. It is perhaps of interest to note that one of the winners of the 1981 Cannes film advertising festival was a film which carried the message that it was best to read a book.

4.3.4 **BOOKS**

As the conversion to the reading of books is the ultimate aim of all those who deal with the reluctant reader, it is worth examining opinions on the subject expressed by experts cited in the literature.

4.3.4.1 Series writers: (cf. also 2.1.7 and 2.3.3.3.1) Many educators consider that the 'series' form of writing tends to be somewhat inferior and should therefore be discouraged. By and large children tend to hold the opposite view and this disapproval may cause those who enjoy such books to feel guilty about their choice of reading material and to

eventually decide not to read at all. Chambers describes correspondence which he had with Malcolm Saville and Joan Tate, two 'series writers' of teenage books.

The condemnation of his writings because he writes a 'series' book which does not necessarily meet the requirements of an award-winning book, is deplored by Saville. He maintains that he writes to please, and considers this motive a valid criterion of success. In his opinion it is often those very books which educators consider suitable for children whose content and format cause children to become reluctant readers.

Amplifying this point, Tate comments that she actually began to write books when she discovered through her children that there was a great need for teenage fiction, being books with a compelling plot and which take cognizance of the maturity of the young adult (Chambers, 1969: 92-6). She is convinced that very few children would be reluctant readers if they were brought into contact with suitable material. She suggests that if given language at their own level and an exciting but not too long plot, young people will read about any subject but they will be more prepared to do so if the plot relates to their present or future lives (Chambers, 1969: 96).

It would seem that the outright rejection of 'series' books may well lead to a rejection of, what could be, an extremely useful tool in combating the incidence of reluctant reading.

Having surveyed the literature dealing with possible causes, means of prevention and diminution of the incidence of reluctant reading, it would seem apparent that although there is no reason to despair there is little cause for complacency among educators and librarians. Although much has already been achieved, the literature indicates that a great deal of work still needs to be done in the field if the problem of the fairly widespread occurrence of reluctant reading among children is to be contained.

SECTION C

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER 5

EXPOSITION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 SELECTION OF SAMPLE

The discussion of the selection of an appropriate sample for the proposed empirical study falls into 2 categories, viz. (a) the selection criteria and (b) a description of the chosen sample.

5.1.1 **Reasons for choosing 11 - 12 year olds**: The motive for selecting 11 - 12 year olds as subjects for this study derived from opinions expressed in the literature surveyed. There was consensus among the authorities that most children reach their reading peak at this period of their lives, research having revealed that if they have not begun reading extensively by the time adolescence has been reached, there is little chance of them becoming consistent readers, rare that they even find pleasure in books (Chambers, 1973: 27; Theophane, 1964: 62).

Public library membership has been found to increase during the primary-school years, possibly as a result of the fact that children are then able to come to the library on their

own and their skills in reading are on the increase. The curve, then, begins to decline from the age of 11. The reason suggested for this is that formal study has begun to occupy more and more of the child's time. However, it has been found that those who remain members increase their reading (Leng, 1968: 22).

These findings corroborate the opinion of Chambers, Theophane (cf. beginning of this section) and Jenkinson, who write that the interest in reading reaches its peak in early adolescence and then declines sharply in the high-school child (Jenkinson, 1964: 55)

While studying various investigations on the type and quantity of reading done by children, Cleary found that reading as a leisure activity was at its zenith between the ages of 8 and 13. During the primary school years children tend to enjoy all activities associated with books and literature, but after the age of 13 attitudes towards reading become eroded. Cleary cites 2 of the investigations on which she based this statement. One is an opinion poll of teenage reading conducted in 1959, which revealed that 54% of the respondents did not on the previous day spend any time reading save for schoolwork (Institute of student opinion, 1959: 38). The other is an investigation conducted in New York State which revealed that 1 of the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm for reading among teenagers could be attributed to the fact that more than half the selected books read by high school pupils in literature classes ranked low

in interest (Norvell, 1950: 84). Fortunately as a result of this study reading programs in the State were extensively altered (Cleary, 1972: 16-7).

Two analytical studies were undertaken in 1929 and 1952 respectively. Their findings did not vary greatly, except for differences in the reports of an increase in magazine- and newspaper-reading at all levels, and of a more rapid increase in reading in the case of primary-school children. The studies revealed a rapid increase of voluntary reading in the primary school up to as much as approximately 100%, but although this trend continued in some high schools, the average high school pupils usually showed a marked decrease in reading (Hayes, 1956: 43).

Various reasons for this decline in reading have been proposed. It is suggested, for example, that between the ages of 10 and 14 reading begins to suffer increasingly from the competition of such activities and interests as films, television, radio and comics (Arbuthnot, 1957: 587). The primary schoolchild's reading is expected to reach a peak at the 9- to 10-year level, because by then the basic skills of reading have normally been mastered (Rosen, 1961: 84). It is also at this period that reading difficulties become acute. The reading of textbooks becomes a problem and the child escapes from his failures in the illusory world of the cinema (Arbuthnot, 1957: 598).

It was decided therefore to design a questionnaire by means of which an attempt would be made to discover what factors

appeared to influence children towards reading enthusiasm or reluctance. In order to eliminate the latecomer to the field of reading the children selected should be between the ages of 8 and 14 (i.e. preferably pre-adolescent in Piagetian terms) and in accordance with the findings of the literature consulted.

5.1.2 **Sample selected**: It was decided to examine a population of 54 Standard 4 pupils, comprising 28 boys and 26 girls, who ranged in age from 11 years 3 months to 13 years 1 month at the time of the survey. All attended a private primary school in an urban area of Cape Town. All the subjects were of the same faith, lived in a few adjacent suburbs and represented a cultural unit in the community. In addition to the 2 official languages they studied a third language related to their culture. Although there were significant economic differences relating to the socio-economic circumstances (i.e. some of the children came from extremely wealthy families and others from families in whose cases school fees had to be sponsored) there was none among the group whose families lived below the accepted national poverty datum line. The children lived either in flats or houses, but this delimitation in itself is no indication of their socio-economic status.

The occupations of the parents will be dealt with in more detail when the results of the questionnaire are to be discussed. At this stage it will suffice to say that all of

them were either professionals, businessmen or white-collar workers. The subjects were guaranteed complete confidentiality, as no one other than the investigator would ever have access to their questionnaires.

The children were divided into 2 classes, each consisting of precisely 27 children. They had an almost equal division of children with regard to sex (to be referred to as A and B for the sake of convenience), having 14 boys and 13 girls. The division between classes was based on 2 basic principles. The first of these was the condition of a fairly even distribution of intelligence and scholastic ability as evident from their scholastic records. Second, in accordance with the spirit of the school's educational policy that each child should spend at least a year as a class-mate of every other child in his standard, children were reshuffled every year. Accordingly, the composition of each class was somewhat altered from that of the previous year.

Having administered the questionnaire to this group of children, it was decided that (in view of the fact that the investigator knew many of the children in this group fairly intimately - a factor which potentially may have influenced the results) it would be advantageous to use the Standard 4 pupils of the following year (in which case limited familiarity existed) as a control group. It was thought, therefore, that it would be of interest to note whether the results of this second investigation would differ in any significant manner from those ascertained from the original

group.

This control group consisted of 52 children, viz. 34 boys and 18 girls, ranging in age from 10 years 9 months to 12 years 11 months at the time of the survey. In the one class (Class C) there were 17 boys and 10 girls and in the other class (Class D) there were 17 boys and 8 girls. All other criteria were basically identical to those of Classes A and B. The difference in the agespan between Classes A and B on the one hand and C and D on the other is that Classes A and B received their questionnaire in September 1979 and Classes C and D in March 1980.

All respondents in the 4 classes filled in the questionnaire, with the exception of 1 boy in Class A, 1 in Class C and 1 in Class D, who were ill and therefore absent from school on the day of the investigation. It was decided that no purpose would be served if the test was administered to them separately at a later date. Thus, the alternative was preferred. One of the girls in Class C emigrated after having answered the questionnaire and without having left her academic record or reading list. It was therefore decided to omit her responses to the questionnaire.

The potential of a library and of individual books is not unknown to these children. The school itself has an excellent school library, in which pupils attend a weekly English and bi-weekly Afrikaans library period. The library is also used for supervised project work. It is open during breaks so that books may be changed and children may chat,

browse or play chess in the library throughout the school day. The debating society meets there during a long break and the chess club meets there after school hours.

The library has a variety of materials, viz. books, maps, paintings, pictures of interest, displays of pupils' work and its new acquisitions, the record player is often used. Collections of both books and picture material for the use of the staff are available.

The library is under the supervision of a fully qualified librarian with more than a decade's experience in this library. There are also voluntary parent helpers, teachers who come to project lessons and pupil assistants.

There are 3 public libraries in the area in which the pupils live. There are also several bookshops in this area, of which at least 2 have very large collections of children's books available for sale. Among the staff who man these shops are a few who are fully qualified librarians.

5.2 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The procedure chosen for an empirical study should be the one most likely to elicit the data required (Carnovsky, 1957: 234).

Generally speaking, information can be garnered from people by either a face-to-face verbal interview or by means of a questionnaire, or by a combination of the two. A face-to-face verbal interview is usually administered on a one-to-one basis (the investigator and the person being

questioned) and tends to be very time-consuming. Another disadvantage of this method is that the results may reflect the personal bias of the questioner if he has been unable to remain completely objective throughout the interview. This method is very useful if opinions or attitudes are being sought. If, however, as in this case, factual answers are required which can be obtained in a group situation and within a minimum space of time, the employment of a structured questionnaire is more suitable.

A reason for favouring the use of a questionnaire rather than an interview is that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent the answers to an interview being discussed among the pupils during the course of the series of interviews needed for this project. This difficulty, however, can be obviated, if the questionnaire is presented to all within a short timespan.

If a person is ill at ease, he often tends not to concentrate on the questions asked, thus giving an inaccurate or inappropriate response. Moreover, it is not unusual in such cases for replies to be given according to what the respondent conjectures are those either expected from him or in his view reflect his personality and ability in the best light. A questionnaire helps to ease the tension which can be caused by an alien atmosphere which may develop in a personal interview (Schauffer, 1964: 16).

The number of respondents to the questionnaire can be limited by sampling. Either an arbitrary selection (e.g.

every fifth person according to alphabetical order) can be made or the group can be stratified according to such variables as age or scholastic ability, in which case an equal number from each level are chosen and this sample represents a microcosm of the society from whence they have been drawn. The results of the answers in either form of sampling are deemed to be generally true for (i.e. representative of) the entire society being studied. It was decided not to employ the method of sampling within the group chosen for the empirical investigation but to test a complete class, largely because the children used in this study formed a too homogeneous group, thereby not representing a cross-section of the population of a typical urban area in Cape Town. Instead of having a control group and applying variables to the other group, 2 groups were tested to ascertain whether the results would be consistent. Although the groups tested were atypical of the general society they represented the upper strata in terms of wealth and education and therefore, if reluctant readers were to be found in their midst, it would seem reasonable to expect that at least as many reluctant readers would be found in the other strata of society. In so far as various factors may seem to affect the child's inclination towards becoming, or not becoming, a reader, it could be expected that these same factors, if present, are likely to influence children in all strata of society. The issue does not, however, fall within the confines of this thesis, which will be restricted to the

examination of a specific group within the society.

Having decided upon the use of a questionnaire, it became necessary to design one which would meet certain fundamental criteria. These relate to such considerations as that it should be clear and unambiguous in its wording, so that the respondents will understand precisely what is being asked and so that the answers may be as accurate as possible (Carnovsky, 1957: 237).

People tend not to have either the time or the patience to study a preamble. Therefore directions should be clear and terms should be concise and to the point (Hammer, 1968: 305-9). The avoidance of technical terms which may be unknown to many is therefore advisable, unless the questionnaire is directed at those who are completely conversant with them (Mulder, 1972: 90). Questions should be designed on the basis of taking the respondents' level of understanding into account, 2 simple rather than 1 complex question generally being preferable, otherwise an obtained datum will be limited in value (Romine, 1948: 69; Sanders, 1958: *). This is the reason why this questionnaire, having regard to the fact that the recipients would be children, contains so many short questions.

The words used in this questionnaire are as simple as possible. This was done in the light of research undertaken by Belson, who analysed over 2,000 questions, put to people in British opinion polls during a 2-year period in the early 1960s. He then completed 4 lists each comprising 29

questions. A sample totalling 246 people all living in London and coming from all walks of life were interviewed with one of the lists. He claims to have proved the hypothesis that there is a material difference between that which is asked and that which is answered. On average 71% of the sample did not understand the words of his questionnaire. In fact the highest degree of understanding of any question was 58% (Belson, 1981: 23, 27-8, 41-4, 350-1). If his analysis is accurate, it implies that a questionnaire, directed at children (unless carefully scrutinized) may well contain words which are foreign to them.

The grouping of questions was done, in accordance with the advice of Romine, either because they were related or when required to be answered in uniform fashion so as to prevent the repetition of directions (Romine, 1948: 69). It is best if the respondent does not think that the questionnaire is biased (Mulder, 1972: 90). Therefore in an attempt to eliminate biased alternatives, viz. 2 favourable, 1 neutral and 2 unfavourable, are given when requiring a true response (Sanders, 1958: *).

The questionnaire used in this empirical study had to be partly original because no trace could be found of a previous questionnaire designed specifically to investigate the reasons why children do or do not read. However, several questionnaires designed to investigate the reading habits and interests of children at various ages were studied, and it is upon these questionnaires that the one employed in

this investigation was based.

The general format used was that applied by Schauffer (1964: 18-9). The questions asked drew their inspiration from various sources, viz.

a) taken verbatim from the Schauffer (1964: 18-9) questionnaire;

b) taken verbatim from Stone's (1951: 39-40) questionnaire;

c) based on questions put in the questionnaire of both of the above;

d) questions suggested by several of the writers surveyed, viz. Andrews (1977: 126), Clarke (1969: *), Cleary (1939: 120), Greenberg (1970: 311-2), Hunt and Davitt (1937: 93) and Jenkins (1971: 137-45); and

e) opinions and findings as revealed in the literature survey.

5.3 METHODS OF ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was administered to Classes A and B on 2 consecutive days. The respondents of the first day were requested not to discuss the questions with those who had not yet completed the questionnaire. Classes C and D received the questionnaire during successive lecture periods.

The children were in a relaxed environment, seated at their own desks in their own classrooms, having on their desks

only the questionnaire, pens and rulers. The only adult present was the investigator. The incentive given for the completion of the questionnaire with as little interruption as possible was that this would herald the commencement of a free period during which they could go outside to play. The questionnaires were placed face down on the desks and it was explained that the results would be confidential, being shared between them and the investigator (cf. also 5.2.2). Each question was read aloud, elucidated where necessary, and questions answered if this did not suffice. A suitable time was then given for the completion of the question or questions. This method was used not because some sections of the questionnaire were thought to be ambiguous but because many of the children's family relationships were complex. This will be more fully discussed in Chapter 6, in which the individual questions are dealt with at length. Care was taken to give the same information at each session, this being noted down before the sessions began.

5.4 FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Two further sources of information were used in an attempt at reaching a greater understanding of the respondents.

5.4.1 **Reading-record cards**: The school library employs the reading-record card system,(viz. the title of every book borrowed is recorded under the child's name), and although this does not guarantee that the books listed have been

read, it serves as a guide as to the type of books borrowed by each subject.

Unfortunately the investigator was unable to obtain a complete set of reading-record cards for Classes A and B during their Standard 4 year, but a complete set of their Standard 5 year was available, and where possible these will be compared to ascertain whether they differ in any significant manner from those of the previous year. A complete set for Standard 4 for Classes C and D was also not obtainable, as some of the children appear to have removed their cards.

5.4.2 Academic record: The principal of the school gave an assessment of the results received in the third term of Standard 4 for both groups (i.e. 1979 and 1980), both for individual subjects and an overall assessment of each individual child. These were not in terms of examination marks but in terms of a rating, ranging from excellent, good, average to weak (the pupil's do not have examinations but write tests throughout the term).

As these assessments were based on only 1 term's work they may not be completely reliable, as pupils often do not necessarily achieve their usual results over a short space of time.

5.5 **THE RATIONALE OF THE INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS** (cf.Annexure A)

Question 1 This was necessary in order to identify the individual respondents concerned, otherwise the additional information, being the reading-record card (cf. 5.4.1) and the academic record (cf. 5.4.2) could not have been used. Moreover it obviated the question which would have been necessary to ascertain the sex of the respondent.

Question 2: To ascertain whether the pupil fell within the 11- to-12 year old range which, for reasons given in section 5.1.1, it was decided to explore in this empirical study.

Question 3: It was felt that this information might assist in an assessment of the home background, for according to the literature (cf.2.2.8 and 3.2) it appears that this can be of much influence. Moreover, it was asserted in section 5.1.2 that none of the parents were of the labouring classes, and this question was inserted to verify such an assumption. Parents were defined as resident parents, whether natural or step- and, in the case of a one-parent family, the other parent was only named if he/she was seen by the child for any significant periods of time, i.e. sufficient to be of influence.

Questions 8, 11, 15, 22, 27, 32, 37, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46 and 47 were all based on this definition of parents. Where there were parents it was deemed to be sufficient if 1 parent

answered in the affirmative.

Questions 4 and 5: These questions were asked in order to determine the size of the child's family, because according to the literature this could influence reader reluctance (cf. 2.2.8.3). Sisters and brothers referred to resident siblings, even if they were step- or half- and to non-resident siblings, step- or half-, only if they were seen on a regular weekly basis. Both the definition of parents and siblings were explained verbally to each class.

Question 6: The importance of belonging to the public library was mentioned repeatedly in the literature (cf. 2.2.8.1, 3.3.2.2.8 and 3.3.3). Therefore, this question was intended to establish whether or not there is a significant relationship between readers and public library members.

Question 7: The importance of family outings (cf. 3.2.3), of pre-school years (cf. 3.3.1), and that of early book borrowing (cf. 3.3.3.3.2) has been emphasized in the literature. It was therefore felt that the response to such a question might demonstrate if this had proved relevant in the development of reading and non-reading behaviour patterns among the respondents.

Questions 8 and 9: These questions were designed to determine what status reading had in the child's home (cf. 2.2.2)

and whether, if the answer to Question 6 had been in the affirmative, it was something which was done in imitation of the parents (cf. 3.2.8). This was also an attempt to ascertain the quality of the child's home life (cf. 3.2.14).

Question 10: It is possible to belong to but not use the public library. Conversely it is possible to use but not belong to the public library. The question was designed to clarify this point. It was also inserted to discover whether the usage of the library differed between girls and boys.

Questions 11, 12 and 13: These questions were designed to assess the quality of the child's home life (cf. 3.2.14) and the status (cf. 2.2.2) of book reading in the child's environment. The importance of book discussion (cf. 3.2.4) has been touched upon in this survey and this question might assist in demonstrating whether or not it is a relevant factor in preventing the development of reluctant readers.

Questions 14, 15, 16 and 17: In disadvantaged homes (cf. 2.2.2) there appears to be nothing at all to read. These questions were designed to ascertain whether reading, in all its forms, was customary in the child's background and to ascertain whether or not it received parental encouragement (cf. 3.2.9). These questions were also designed to discover if there were parents and children who did not read books but read magazines, comics and newspapers instead (cf.

2.3.3.1.2).

Question 18: The purpose of this question was to ascertain whether there were any sex differences as to where the child obtained books, and also to discover if the child made use of all available sources of books.

Questions 19, 20 and 21: The reason for including these questions was to discover the degree of influence of the mass media (cf. 2.3.3.2 and 3.3.4.1) on the child's reading.

Question 22: The aim of this question was to ascertain the parents' attitude to fiction (cf. 2.2.4 and 3.2.9) and their aspirations (cf. 3.2.10).

Question 23: This question was set with a view to determining the actual times generally devoted to reading during an average day. According to Schauffer (1964: 22-3) there is no one who can state exactly when and for how long a period he read, but such a question is asked in the hope that over a period of time a general pattern may emerge.
Although Schauffer did not specify any particular type of reading being only interested in whether or not a reading pattern did exist, the investigator in this study did explain to the respondents that this question only included leisure reading, i.e. excluding schoolwork.

Question 24: A child's interest in hobbies may result in both pros and cons in relation to his interest in reading. Time which could have been spent reading, may instead have been devoted to such hobby or hobbies. On the positive side, it should be taken into account that a hobby or hobbies may well promote curiosity and interest, the satisfaction of which may be found in books. Thus, the interest in a hobby may in turn lead to a permanent interest in reading. In order to discover which of the above premises seems the more valid, this question was asked.

Questions 25 and 26: The importance of a place to read, with special reference to the bedrooms, has been discussed in the literature (cf. 2.2.8.2). Therefore this question was set in order to discover whether or not it did appear to affect reluctant readers.

Questions 27, 28, 29 and 30: The importance in the creation and prevention of reluctant reading of the act of reading aloud to children (especially at an early age) and to being heard to read aloud has been discussed in such sections as 2.2.1, 2.2.6, 2.3.3.2.1, 3.2.1 and 3.2.6. It was felt, therefore, that it was justified to devote 4 questions in attempting to ascertain whether or not this was relevant in the child's background.

Question 31: The child's personal assessment of his own attitude about reading seemed a crucial question in a study as to why he did or did not read.

Question 32: If imitation (cf. 2.2.1 and 3.2.8) is important for determining the child's assessment of his parent's attitude to reading this question would seem of importance even if this assessment was untrue, in terms of objective information.

Question 33: The insertion of this question was intended to ascertain the norm in the home, and to check whether or not the statement made by Melcher (1973: 3110) that siblings may differ in their attitudes to reading is valid.

Question 34: This question was designed to ascertain whether there was a lack of reading material in the home (cf. 2.2.8.1) and the quality of the home environment (cf. 3.2.14). It was realized that the answer would at best be approximate, but it was felt that a pupil whose home was well-stocked with books would answer that it had more than 500 books. When this question was put to the children, they were informed how many books (whether hardcover or paper-backs) were to be found on their school library shelves on average. It was felt that it would be of interest to ascertain whether Chambers' (1969: 115) statement that a home library, even if as small as between 200-500 books,

could help to prevent the incidence of reluctant reading behaviour (cf. 3.2.14).

Questions 35 and 36: These questions were based on the assumed harm that a lack of books may cause (cf. 2.2.8.1) and the importance played in a child's life by the concept of book ownership (cf. 3.2.11).

Question 37: It is presumed that if parents give their children books as gifts at other than 'official' present-giving times, e.g. birthdays, that these parents consider books and their reading to be of importance. In order to ascertain whether or not the parents of the child questioned gave their tacit approval to the child's expending time reading, this question was asked.

Question 38 and 39: The concept of peer attitudes has been dealt with in the literature survey (cf. 3.1.2) and this question sought a link with both the reader and the reluctant reader.

Question 40: This question was intended to examine the importance of linking reading with everyday life (cf. 3.2.5) and its effect on the child as a reader.

Question 41: This question was designed to see if there was a correlation between its answer and the answer to Question

31. If there was not then perhaps 1 of the answers might indicate that it had been given because of some preconception of what would be most acceptable. If this proved to be the case, it would necessitate a close study of the reading-record card.

The reason for believing that a link could be found was based on the statement that readers of books for pleasure and for their own sake can be distinguished from readers of books for information and work, by stronger frustration at being deprived of reading matter (Nell, 1978(a)).

Questions 42 and 43: These questions were asked because, as a rule, there comes a time in a child's life when he no longer wishes to have books read to him, but still wants to discuss them (cf. 3.2.4) with his parents. It was hoped that this question would give some indication of the reading climate of the home, and that it would reveal whether or not the parent who urged the child to read (Question 22) was sufficiently interested to make a personal effort.

Question 44: This question was aimed at establishing whether or not it was true that television imposed itself on the child to such an extent that it inhibited reading (cf. 2.2.7). The observation of Nell (1978(b): 63) and personal observation as to the behaviour in the investigator's own home prompted the inclusion of this question.

Question 45: This question was designed to discover if parental censorship affected the child's disposition towards reading (cf. 2.3.3.3.1).

Question 46: Family outings as a means of stimulating the child and broadening his sphere of interest has an effect on the child's reading according to the literature (cf. 3.2.3). This question was intended to determine the validity of the claim.

Question 47: It would appear that the learning of the techniques of reading eases the child's way to becoming a reader (cf. 3.3.2.1.2.3). Therefore if an adult dictionary is available in the home it may contribute towards the creation of a climate of reading. The question was also posed to ascertain a further factor of the quality of the home reading environment.

Questions 48 and 49: These questions were designed to check possible bias in answering Question 41 and again to determine the respondent's inclination towards reading behaviour.

Question 50: This question was designed to see whether or not there was any significant connection between readers and reluctant readers and their activities, and whether or not the choice of leisure activities differed greatly between boys and girls.

Question 51: It was found by Alick Schauffer (1964: 23) that answers to this question included activities which were casual rather than organized. Therefore, the concept of organized activities (e.g. rugby-playing or regular music lessons) was stressed when explaining this question. Answers were checked as far as possible to ascertain whether or not these criteria were kept in mind. The aim of this question was to discover if lack of time (cf. 2.1.2) did affect reading, or if the child who wishes to read will schedule his life accordingly, irrespective of the range and intensity of his outside activities.

Question 52: This question was set in an attempt to see whether or not there was any correlation between reading behaviour and the amount of non-book material read.

Questions 53, 54 and 55: An attempt was made to ascertain attitudes towards school and the reluctant reader (cf. 2.3.1.1).

Question 56: The consensus of the literature (cf. 4.3.2.1.2) strongly favours the use of paperbacks. Accordingly, it was decided to discover whether or not there was any difference in the attitudes which the reader and the reluctant reader had towards them.

Questions 57, 58 and 59: According to the literature a cause for a lack of reading skill (cf. 2.1.1) which can contribute towards reluctant reading may be that an official language of the country is not the person's first language. It was decided, therefore, to see whether or not this factor affected any child's enthusiasm for reading.

Landy (1977: 381) gives a list of variables researched in the broad context of reading behaviour. Much of this questionnaire was based on her approach. It would seem appropriate to list those which are applicable with the appropriate question number alongside in brackets. It is hoped that this will help to simplify the groupings of the above questions and the answers which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

A. Sex (1)

B. Intelligence (Academic record, as I.Q. scores were not available).

C. Socio-economic factors

- type and level of father's occupation (3)
- type and level of mother's occupation (3)

D. School-related attitudes

- whether the child likes school (53)

- number of subjects the child likes (54)
- which subjects the child likes (54)

E. **Home environment and encouragement to read**

- whether the child has a quiet place to read at home (25, 26)
- number of children in the family (4, 5)
- whether the child was read to when young (29)
- use of library by father (8)
- use of library by mother (8)
- whether the child is taken to plays and concerts (46)

F. **Use of libraries and where child gets books**

- use of public library (6)

G. **Use of leisure time**

- child's spare-time activities (24, 51)
- clubs child belongs to (51)
- lessons child takes (51)
- use of other media, especially television (19, 20)

H. **Types of books enjoyed and their availability**

- format of books preferred, e.g. paperback, comic (52, 56)

I. **Reading and the peer group**

(13, 38, 39)

J. **Bilingualism**

- if child speaks another language fluently (57, 58)
- other languages spoken by child (58)

SECTION D

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will be divided into 2 sections, being the analysis of the questionnaire and an attempt to correlate its findings with the consensus of opinion reflected in the literature survey.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was designed to determine the degree of correlation between environmental factors and reading behaviour. In order to achieve this an attempt was made to test the theory that reluctant readers are made rather than born, i.e. that environmental factors predominate in the foundation of reading behaviour patterns. It therefore seemed most appropriate to divide the children, according to their answers to the questionnaire, into 2 opposing categories, viz. readers and reluctant readers. Bearing this in mind, the answer to Questions 23, 31, 41, 48, 49 and 50 will be the first to be examined. As all the respondents were capable of answering the questionnaire it may be assumed with confidence that they were all functionally literate (cf. also 2.3.1.2) and therefore that there were no

non-readers in the 2 groups tested.

6.1 Self-assessment of attitude towards reading (Question 31)

Most of those who declared that their assessment of their own attitude towards reading was 'very keen', 'keen' or 'enjoy reading', as opposed to 'sometimes', 'seldom read' or 'detest reading', spent more than 30 minutes per day reading, were perturbed when they had nothing to read and consistently placed reading first or second in their choice of leisure activities. Every girl and almost every boy was reading a book when they answered the questionnaire, and all, except 1 and a few who were ambivalent, were enjoying it. It was therefore decided that those who had chosen the first 3 categories as their attitude to reading, would be classed as readers for the purposes of this analysis, while those who chose the latter 3 categories would be classed accordingly as reluctant readers.

It was found that in Classes A and B 19 boys and 24 girls valued their attitude towards reading as being favourable, constituting 70.37% of the boys and 92.30% of the girls. In Classes C and D 21 boys and 13 girls comprising 65.62% of the boys and 76.47% of the girls, valued their attitude towards reading as being favourable.

It appeared that fewer girls (i.e. 13.95%) than boys (i.e. 32.20%) in the experiment were reluctant readers and that although there were both boys and girls who only sometimes

read, there were no girls but only boys who seldom read or disliked reading (cf. 2.1.1).

Classes A and B and Classes C and D did not appear to differ to any considerable extent. It therefore seemed that the bias feared (cf. 5.2.2) did not in fact exist and although the tables reflect each group's individual responses, the analysis will treat the 2 groups as 1 composite whole consisting of 102 children 59 of whom are boys and 43 are girls. For an individual breakdown see Table I.

6.2 Time spent on reading, apart from lessons (Question 23)

None of the respondents stated that he, or she did not read at all. A total of 32.20% of all the boys and 16.28% of all the girls spent less than 30 minutes per day reading on average. It was found that 14.68% of all the boys and 51.16% of all the girls spent between 30 and 60 minutes per day reading and that 41.03% of all the boys and 32.56% of all the girls spent more than 60 minutes per day reading.

As with girls (83.72%) the greater proportion of boys (67.80%) read more than 30 minutes daily. Girls did, however, appear to spend more time reading than boys.

It could be observed that some of those who were defined as reluctant readers (cf. also 6.1) spent considerable time reading (66.67%) and a few readers (cf. also 6.1) (14.29%) did not. This apparent discrepancy could perhaps be accounted for by the existence of outside pressures, such as instances where parents forced the child to read or when the

child's activities did not permit him to read.

Although these results could not be regarded as being completely accurate in objective terms, the replies being of necessity of a subjective nature, it appeared that there was a correlation between the desire to read and the time spent reading, because 85.71% of readers, and only 40.00% of reluctant readers spent more than 30 minutes per day reading.

The difference between the time spent reading in the groups tested in 1979 and 1980 was that in the first group 66.67% of boys and 88.46% of girls spent more than 30 minutes per day reading, whereas in the second group 68.75% of boys and 76.47% of girls read more than 30 minutes per day. Thus, it appeared that the time spent reading did not differ very much.

Those differences which evinced themselves might be due to such environmental pressures as parents urging the child to read. These will be examined in the course of this chapter. For an individual breakdown see Table II (cf. also 6.10 and Table VII).

6.3 **Emotional responses to a lack of reading material**

(Question 41)

An unconcerned attitude to the absence of reading matter was displayed by 60.00% of all the boys and 27.03% of all the girls who reported that they were readers. These represented 57.89% of the boys and 37.50% of the girls in Classes A and

B and 61.90% of the boys and 7.69% of the girls in Classes C and D.

Conversely, none of the reluctant readers in Classes A and B was worried about having nothing available to read, whereas 36.36% of the boys and 50.00% of the girls who were non-readers were perturbed by a lack of reading material in Classes C and D.

It was stated that this question was designed to see whether or not there was a direct correlation between this answer and that of Question 31 (cf. 5.6.1). If the result was negative a close examination of the reading record card would be required. However, the percentage of children, especially boys, unworried by the absence of reading matter was so great that it indicated that, although no relationship could be foundi, it did not reflect on the answer to Question 31. The close correlation between the answers to Question 23 and 31 bore this out.

The reason for this lack of concern might be due to the fact that children, especially boys, are generally not worried about such matters or that this group of children came from an environment which rarely exposes them to such an eventuality (cf. Table III).

6.4 <u>Present reading and reaction</u> (Questions 48 and 49)

Every single girl in both groups was reading a book at the time of answering the questionnaire. The same was not true of the boys, of whom 15.00% of the readers and 37.84% of the

reluctant readers answered this question in the negative. Of the readers in Classes A and B 5.26% were not reading and in Classes C and D 23.81%, were not reading. Of the reluctant readers 37.50% in Classes A and B and 36.36% of those in Classes C and D were not reading a book at the time of answering the questionnaires.

It was found that the 1 reader in Classes A and B who was not reading and the 2 in Classes C and D who were not reading had not been upset by a lack of literature and spent less than 30 minutes per day reading. Yet these 3 boys had assessed themselves as being readers. However, as reading was not defined as book reading in Question 31 and as they comprised 3.90% of the readers, being 2.33% of those in Classes A and B and 5.88% of those in Classes C and D, it was decided not to remove them from those who had been classified as readers.

The attitude of the children towards their enjoyment of the books they were reading was almost identical. In Classes A and B 1 girl reader was dubious and 1 boy reader was not enjoying his book. In Classes C and D 1 girl reader was dubious, 1 girl reader was not enjoying her book and 1 boy reluctant reader was not enjoying his book.

6.5 <u>Choice of leisure activity</u> (Question 50)

It appeared that the children investigated liked to read during their leisure time and, in fact, except in the case of the boys who were reluctant readers in Classes C and D,

preferred it to any other leisure activity. 55.93% of all the boys and 90.90% of all the girls questioned mentioned reading as a choice of something to do when they had an hour or 2 to spend (see Table IV). Of all the boys, 70.00% who were readers and 72.97% of all the girls who were readers, mentioned reading as a choice, and even among the reluctant readers 26.31% of all the boys and 50.00% of all the girls nominated reading as a chosen leisure activity. If we examine the answers from Classes A and B we shall find that the results differed little as regards readers, the former being slightly higher, but as regards reluctant readers the difference was greater, but here the numbers were small and 1 child's opinion made a great difference to the results as expressed proportionately in percentages. Although in each case the girls read more than the boys in the case of readers the difference was less than 3.00%, suggesting that sex did not greatly influence the enthusiasm for reading at this 11-to 12-year old level.

Next in popularity was sport and play, and the results indicated that children who were readers (irrespective of sex) preferred to play alone or with friends or pets, rather than to participate in organized sport. This was especially interesting, because among those showing such preferences were some who had represented, in sports, the province in which they lived. In respect of the reluctant readers this preference was shown and they seemed, except in a few cases of the boys in Classes C and D, to be equally pleased to choose

either.

It was interesting to note that many of the girls who were readers in Classes A and B and 1 of the boys who was a reader in Classes A and B mentioned homework as a leisure-time activity. No other child made this error (cf. Table IV).

27.50% of all boy readers, 48.65% of all girl readers, no boy reluctant readers and 16.67% of all girl reluctant readers placed reading as their first choice of leisure activity. 37.50% of all boy readers, 29.73% of all girl readers, no boy reluctant reader and 16.67% of all girl reluctant readers chose reading as their second favored leisure activity. It was third favourite for 5.00% of all boy readers, 5.41% of all girl readers, 10.53% of all boy reluctant readers and 16.67% of all girl reluctant readers. Only among all the boy reluctant readers did 5.26% rank it in fourth place. It was unplaced as a choice of leisure activity by 30.00% of all boy readers, 18.92% of all girl readers, 84.21% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers.

37.66%, 32.47%, 5.19%, 0.00% and 24.68% of readers placed reading first, second, third, fourth or not at all respectively as a leisure activity. 4.00%, 4.00%, 12.00%, 4.00% and 76.00% of reluctant readers placed reading first, second, third, fourth or not at all respectively as a leisure activity. Boys placed it first, second, third, fourth or not at all in the following respective percentages,

18.64%, 25.42%, 6.78%, 1.69% and 47.66% and girls in the following percentages, 44.19%, 25.58%, 6.98%, 0.00% and 25.58%.

The majority of readers rated reading as their first choice of leisure activity, whereas most reluctant readers did not rate it at all. Girls in both categories rated reading as a more favoured activity than boys, although many more boy readers than girl reluctant readers rated it as a favoured activity.

For a breakdown of choices according to classes see Table IVA.

6.6 **Parental occupation** (Question 3)

This question confirmed that parents were either professionals, housewives or, by and large, owned their own businesses or factories. It was difficult to draw any conclusion from these answers, because many of the parents were university-educated and often had qualified as professionals, but had then gone into business, or, in the case of the women, retired and become housewives or had taken up occupations (e.g. that of beautician or bookkeeper) more suited to their desire to be left with more free time. Some of the women who were professionals helped their husbands in their businesses and several women were attending university in a student capacity.

6.7 **Size of family** (Questions 4 and 5)

A mere 4 of the 102 children who answered the questionnaire were only children. The vast majority had 1 or 2 siblings. Five of the children had 3 siblings and of these 3 of the children were readers. In the case of 1 of these children 2 of the siblings lived with the father and his new wife, but were seen on a regular weekly basis. Five of the children had 4 siblings, but only 1 was a reluctant reader, and even this reluctant reader was a sister of 1 of the readers. In this case, although they all lived in the same house, they were not all of the same parents, and in 1 of the other cases only 1 of the siblings lived in the same home as the respondent. In a third case, although they were all siblings, only the child who answered the questionnaire lived at home, the others having grown up and left.

There were actually 5 sets of siblings, although none constituted twins, and an attempt will be made to compare their answers later in this analysis, (cf. 6.26).

6.8 **Public library influence** (Questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10)

86.44% of all the boys and 83.72% of all the girls were members of the public library. Of the readers 87.50% of all the boys and 81.08% of all the girls were members of the public library and of the reluctant readers 84.21% of all the boys and 100.00% of all the girls were members of the public library. There did not appear to be any sex difference in public library membership (see Table V), as this

was inconsistent. A breakdown of membership according to the individual classes is also given in Table V.

It was found that among the readers 47.50% of all the boys and 48.65% of all the girls recalled having belonged to the library before they were 6, whereas of the reluctant readers 42.11% of all the boys and 33.33% of all the girls recalled belonging to the library before they were 6.

In regard to instances of parents being members of the public library 85.00%of all the boys and 67.57% of all the girls who were readers stated that their parents were members, whereas only 52.63%of all the boys and 50.00% of all the girls who were reluctant readers stated that their parents were members of the public library.

Sibling membership of the public library among readers was 97.37% for all the boys and 77.78% for all the girls. For the reluctant readers 88.89% of all the boys and 50.00% of all the girls maintained that their siblings belonged to the public library.

Examining the regularity of public library visits, it appeared that 37.29% of all boys and 44.19%of all girls visited the public library at least once per month, 33.90% of all boys and 32.56% of all girls visited it at least once every 3 months, 20.34% of all boys and 11.63% of all girls seldom visited it and 8.47% of all boys and 11.63% of all girls never visited it.

If this is examined in relationship to readers and reluctant readers it is found that of the readers 47.50% of all the

boys and 45.95% of all the girls visited the public library at least once per month, 27.50% of all the boys and 32.43% of all the girls visited it at least once every 3 months. 20.00% of all the boys and 10.81% of all the girls seldom visited it and 5.00% of all the boys and 10.81%of all the girls never visited it.

In the case of the reluctant readers 5.79% of all the boys and 33.33% of all the girls visited the public library at least once per month, 47.37% of all the boys and 33.33% of all the girls visited it at least once every 3 months, 21.11% of all the boys and 16.67% of all the girls seldom visited it and 15.79% of all the boys and 16.67% of all the girls never visited it.

Here again there did not seem to be any marked pattern in regard to sex differences.

For the individual breakdowns into classes see Table V.

6.9 Part played by discussion in the children's lives

(Questions 11, 12 and 13)

The discussion of books was reportedly present in the lives of all the children, both boys and girls, readers and reluctant reader. 75.00% of all the boys and 81.09% of all the girls readers discussed books with their parents, whereas 57.89% of all the boys and 66.67% of all the girls who were reluctant readers discussed books with their parents. It therefore appeared that, although in both cases it was the girls who were more likely to discuss books with their

parents, the boy reader was more likely to discuss books with his parents than either the boy or girl reluctant reader.

Discussions about books with siblings also appeared to be a common feature among the children, and in the case of readers 55.26% of all the boys and 77.78% of all the girls and in the case of reluctant readers 72.22% of all the boys and 33.33% of all the girls discussed books with their siblings. Here, unlike the case of parental discussion, there did not seem to be any pattern based on sexual differences.

92.50% of all the boys and 97.30% of all the girls who read, and 89.47% of all the boys and 83.33% of all the girls who were reluctant readers discussed books with their friends. Here again there did not appear to be a difference based on sex, but as reported, readers discussed books with their friends more than did reluctant readers.

These percentages were higher than the highest percentage of children who discussed books with their parents or their siblings indicating that this group was fairly homogeneous and all agreed that book discussion with each other was both common and acceptable. The results of this section could perhaps be examined profitably when peer influences (cf. Question 38 and 39) are discussed in the next chapter, in which these conclusions and those of the literature survey will be compared (cf. Table VI).

6.10 **Parents' attitude towards reading** (Questions 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 32, 40, 42, 43(i), 43(ii), 45(i), 45(ii) and 47)
The parents of 95.00% of all the boys and 100.00% of all the girl readers received newspapers. In the case of 100.00% of all the boys who were reluctant readers and 100.00% of all the girls who were reluctant readers, their parents received newspapers. In this respect the frequency was defined as being at least daily. The newspaper could either be delivered or brought into the home. It therefore appeared that at least 1 daily newspaper was present in almost every home, irrespective of whether the children were readers or otherwise.

77.50% of the parents of all the boy and 94.59% of the parents of all the girl readers subscribed to magazines. In the case of the reluctant readers, 84.21% of the parents of all the boys and 83.33% of the parents of all the girls subscribed to magazines. Once again there appeared to be almost no difference between the number of parents whose children were readers and the number of parents whose children were not, in regard to the question of magazine subscription. In both cases the number was high, especially when this did not include magazines bought on an irregular, haphazard or even on a regular basis. This, unlike newspapers, only included magazines for which a subscription had been taken out.

The same qualifications as to the definition of subscription was applied to the next 2 questions regarding siblings subscribing to magazines and comics. This was included here on

the assumption that, as parents usually paid for such subscriptions, as opposed to casual purchases, their permission and approval were needed for such a subscription to exist. Of those who had siblings, 39.47% of all the boy- and 38.89% of all the girl-readers, 44.44% of all the boy reluctant readers and 16.66% of all the girl reluctant readers, had siblings who subscribed to magazines. No apparent sex difference seemed evident, but the number of magazines to which parents subscribed for themselves was approximately double that of the number to which they subscribed for their children.

Subscriptions to comics (these tended to be weekly British rather than glossy American ones) for siblings, where these existed, was 50.00% of all boy readers, 41.67% of all girl readers, 44.44% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers had siblings who subscribed to comics. There did not appear to be a larger number of children who had siblings who subscribed to comics than who had siblings who subscribed to magazines.

75.00% of the parents of boy readers, 81.08% of the parents of girl readers, 89.19% of the parents of boy reluctant readers and 75.00% of the parents of girl reluctant readers urged their children to read. Therefore, it would seem that a great number of the parents of both boys and girls, whether readers or reluctant readers, urged their children to read.

Of those parents it appeared that 97.50% of all boy readers,

81.89% of all girl readers, 94.74% of all boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers assessed their parents as people who enjoyed reading. Therefore it would seem that this group appeared to have parents who read newspapers and magazines, subscribed to magazines and comics for their children, urged their children to read and themselves enjoyed reading, irrespective of whether or not their children were readers. It would seem from these figures that the parents of the children tested were a fairly homogeneous group as indicated in section 6.6.

The consulting of books seemed fairly common within the group, the percentages who did so comprising 77.50% of the boy readers, 86.49% of the girl readers, 84.21% of the boy reluctant readers and 33.33% of the girl reluctant readers. Recommending books to parents was not very common, recurring among only 42.50% of all boy readers, 56.76% of all girl readers, 31.58% of all boy reluctant readers and 33.33% of all girl reluctant readers. Of these, 58.82% of all the boy readers' parents, 52.38% of all the girl readers' parents, 83.33% of all the boy reluctant readers' parents and 0.00% of all the girl reluctant readers' parents did as their children recommended. 64.70% of all the boy readers' parents, 71.43% of all the girl readers' parents, 33.33% of all the boy reluctant readers' parents and 0.00% of all the girl reluctant readers' parents discussed the books with their children. In this instance there appeared to be a sex difference in that in the case of both readers and non-

readers it was the girls who most often recommended books to their parents, but even here more boy readers than either boy or girl non-readers recommended books to their parents. Moreover in the case of readers more parents discussed the books with their children than actually read them (this could perhaps be because the parents had previously read the books), whereas in the case of reluctant readers parents sometimes read the books, but did not follow this up with a discussion. It did appear that parents of reluctant readers were prepared to put less personal effort into persuading their children to read, compared to the parents of readers. 35.00% of the parents of all the boy readers, 45.95% of the parents of all the girl readers, 47.39% of the parents of all the boy reluctant readers and 16.67% of the parents of all the girl reluctant readers censored their reading, consisting 40.26% of parents of readers and 40.00% of parents of reluctant readers. Divided into categories, it meant that book censoring accounted for 29.87% of the parents of readers and 47.37% of the parents of reluctant readers, whereas 25.97% of the parents of readers and 8.00% of the parents of reluctant readers censored comic reading. Thus 27.50% of the parents of all the boy readers censored book reading and 22.50% censored comic reading. 32.43% of the parents of all the girl readers censored book reading and 29.73% censored comic reading. 42.11% of the parents of all the boy reluctant readers censored book reading and 10.52% censored comic reading. 16.67% of the parents of all

the girl reluctant readers censored book reading and 0.00% censored comic reading.

It would seem therefore that more parents censored book reading than comic reading, that the number of parents censoring either book or comic reading was approximately the same whether parents of readers or of reluctant readers, and that, whereas in the case of readers the parents of girls were stricter, the reverse was true in the case of reluctant readers.

The last question dealt with the issue as to whether or not there was an adult dictionary in the home. 92.50% of all the boy readers and 97.30% of all the girl readers, 88.24% of all the boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all the girl reluctant readers answered in the affirmative. There seemed no appreciable difference between the homes of the readers and the reluctant readers.

For the breakdown in percentages of these questions in relation to each class refer to Table VII.

6.11 Sources of books (Question 18)

It transpired that the school library was the most used source of books for leisure reading. In the case of boy readers 95.00% borrowed from the school library, while 97.30% of all girl readers, 84.21% of all boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers also borrowed books from the school library. Thus, 96.10% of the readers and 88.00% of the reluctant readers used the school

library as a source of books. It appeared that girls used the school library more often than boys, and that readers used the school library more often than reluctant readers.

As a source of books, bookshops ranked second, being used by 75.00% of all the boy readers, 97.31% of all the girl readers (an average of 85.71% of the readers). They were also used by 73.68% of all the boy reluctant readers, 83.33% of all the girl reluctant readers, (averaging 76.00% of the reluctant readers). It appeared therefore that more girls than boys, whether readers or reluctant readers, while more readers than reluctant readers used bookshops. Even in terms of reluctant readers this is a very high percentage, and would indicate that the use of bookshops, book ownership and the spending of money on books was the norm within the family circle in which they lived.

Gifts accounted for the third greatest source of books, being 75.00% of all boy readers, 91.89% of all girl readers, 63.16% of all boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers. Thus, 83.12% of readers and 72.00% of reluctant readers stated that gifts were a source of books. It would appear that more girls than boys, and more readers than reluctant readers, received books as gifts. It is difficult to assess which comes first (i.e. whether reluctance is promoted by a lack of availability, or whether - which is more probable at this age - books are not usually presented as gifts, unless the donor is sure that they will be appreciated). As these children mixed a great deal socially, the

common usage of the bookshop would seem to be linked with the relatively high percentage of prominence which gifts enjoyed as a source of books (cf. Table VIII).

Since both gifts and the bookshop were an important source of books, it was of interest to see if the home itself had suitable books for the children. These could belong to sibling, be left-overs from the parents' childhoods, be part of the adult bookshelf or have been purchased by the parents in readiness for a time when the child was searching for something to read. 72.50% of all the boy readers, 70.27% of all the girl readers (constituting 71.43% of all the readers) found home to be a source of books. 68.42% of all the boy reluctant readers, 83.33% of all the girl reluctant readers (averaging 72.00% of all the reluctant readers) found home to be a source of books. There did not appear to be any appreciable difference as to whether or not home was a source of books, be the child a reader or a reluctant reader. Although the home did supply a large percentage of reading material, this was not as large a percentage as the school library, the bookshops or gifts.

Friends were also a source of book material. It was found that 75.00% of all the boy readers, 94.59% of all the girl readers, 42.11% of all the boy reluctant readers and 66.67% of all the girl reluctant readers (representing 84.42% of all the readers and 48.00% of all the reluctant readers) borrowed books from friends. It appeared therefore that more readers than reluctant readers borrowed books from friends

and that more girls than boys in each category borrowed books from friends, although not as many girls who were reluctant readers as boys who were reluctant readers were borrowers of books from friends. Friends were not as large a source of books as were any of the other sources already analysed.

Finally, the public library as a source of books should be analysed. 77.50% of all boy readers, 70.27% of all girl readers, 63.16% of all boy reluctant readers, 83.33% of all girl reluctant readers (constituting 76.62% of all readers and 68.00% of all reluctant readers) used the public library as a source of books. It appeared that more boy than girl readers used the public library, whereas the reverse was true for reluctant readers. More readers used the public library as a source of books than reluctant readers, but even in the case of both readers and reluctant readers it was the fifth out of the 6 sources of books examined.

Jointly the readers ranked their sources of books in the following order of priority: (1)school library, (2) bookshop, (3)borrowed from friends, (4)gifts, (5)the public library and (6)home. The reluctant readers ranked their source of books in the following order: (1)the school library, (2)bookshops (3)gifts and home (equally strongly), (5)the public library and, (6)borrowed from friends.

Boy readers ranked their sources of books in the following order, viz. the school library (highest), the public library (second highest), gifts, the bookshop and borrowing from

friends (jointly third) and , lastly, their homes. The reluctant boy readers most popular source of books was also the school library, followed by the bookshop and the home. Gifts and the public library were of equal importance and borrowing from friends proved the least common source of books.

Girl readers favoured the school library and bookshops jointly first, followed closely with borrowing from friends and gifts. The home and the public library, which ranked lowest in order were an equally strong source of books. Girls who were reluctant readers ranked equally the school library and gifts as sources of books and then ranked equally the bookshop, the public library and the home as sources of books. As with the boys who were reluctant readers, borrowing of books from friends ranked last.

Before concluding this analysis, it is of interest to see whether there were differences in the favoured source of books between boys and girls. Boys' sources of books were the school library 88.14%, bookshops 74.58%, the public library 72.89%, gifts 71.19%, the home 66.10% and, lastly, borrowing from friends 64.41%. Girls agreed with the first 2 sources of books (being the school library at 97.67% and the bookshop at 93.35%), but they then ranked gifts at 93.02%, borrowing from friends at 90.70%, the public library at 76.74% and their homes at 72.09%.

It was found that 36.84% of boy and 45.83% of girl readers in Classes A and B, 42.86% of boy and 61.54% of girl readers

in Classes C and D used all the resources suggested to find books. In the case of reluctant readers 25.00% of the boys and 50.00% of the girls in Classes A and B and 9.09% of the boys and 75.00% of the girls in Classes C and D used all the sources suggested to find books. Thus 40.00% of all boy readers, 51.35% of all girl readers, 15.79% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers made use of all the sources for obtaining books. 45.45% of readers, 28.00% of reluctant readers, 32.20% of boys and 53.59% of girls used all the sources suggested for finding books. Thus, it would seem that readers as opposed to reluctant readers and girls as opposed to boys were more likely to use all the suggested available sources for finding books.
For an individual breakdown according to classes see Table VIII.

6.12 The influence of the mass media (Questions 19, 20, 21 and 44)

It was found that 70.00% of all the boy readers, 75.68% of all the girl readers and 72.73% of all readers owned their own radios, whereas 63.16% of all the boy reluctant readers, 50.00% of all the girl reluctant readers and 60.00% of all the reluctant readers owned their own radios.
Every single child questioned had a television set in his/her home.
Attendance at cinema varied, but none of the children claimed that he/she never went to the cinema. 70.00% of all

boy, 51.35% of all girl readers, 63.16% of all boy reluctant readers and 66.66% of all girl reluctant readers went to cinema fewer than 4 times per month. 15.00% of all boy, 35.16% of all girl readers, 36.84% of all boy reluctant readers and 11.00% of all girl reluctant readers went 4 times per month. 15.00% of all boy readers, 18.92% of all girl readers, 10.53% of all boy reluctant readers and 33.33% of all girl reluctant readers went more than 4 times per month. Thus, 61.04% of all readers and 64.00% of all reluctant readers went fewer than 4 times per month, 24.68% of all readers and 24.00% of all reluctant readers went 4 times per month and 14.29% of all readers and 12.00% of all reluctant readers went more than 4 times per month. 67.80% of boys and 54.49% of girls went fewer than 4 times per month, 20.39% of boys and 20.93% of girls went 4 times per month, and 11.86% of boys and 16.30% of girls went more than 4 times per month. Accordingly, most readers and reluctant readers, both boys and girls, reported that they went fewer than 4 times per month, but whether they were readers or reluctant readers the percentage was higher in the case of boys than girls. In regard to those who visited the cinema 4 times or more per month, no sex pattern emerged. Readers compared to reluctant readers, went more often to cinema, viz. either 4 or more times per month, the percentage for reluctant readers going fewer than 4 times per month being greater than for readers. Whereas more boys attended fewer than 4 times per month than girls, more girls than boys went 4 times or more per month.

The last question regarding the influence of the mass media asked if the child ever read in front of the television. 57.50% of all the boy readers, 70.27% of all the girl readers (i.e. 63.64% of all the readers) read in front of the television, whereas 52.63% of all the boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all the girl reluctant readers (i.e. 52.00% of all the reluctant readers) read in front of television.

For the exact breakdown of these questions into classes see Table IX.

6.13 Interests (Questions 24 and 46)

92.50% of all the boy readers, 94.59% of all the girl readers, 89.47% of all the boy reluctant reader and 75.00% of all the girl reluctant readers had hobbies (i.e. 96.10% of readers and 92.00% of reluctant readers).

90.00% of all the boy readers, 86.49% of all the girl readers, 63.16% of all the boy reluctant readers and 83.33% of all the girl reluctant readers (representing 88.31% of all the readers and 68.00% of all the reluctant readers) had parents who took them on educational excursions.

It therefore meant that, although more readers, both boys and girls had hobbies than either boy or girl reluctant readers, more boys than girls had hobbies. In terms of family excursions this did not appear to be influenced by sex differences but both boys and girls who read were taken on more excursions than boys and girls who were reluctant

readers. See Table X for a breakdown into individual groups.

6.14 Own bedroom or place to read (Questions 25 and 26)

The majority of the children had their own rooms (viz. 94.74% of boy readers in A and B, 91.67% of girl readers in A and B, 87.50% of boy reluctant readers in A and B and 50.00% of girl reluctant readers in A and B). In C and D those who had their own bedrooms comprised 90.45% of boy readers, 92.31% of girl readers, 72.73% of boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of girl reluctant readers. Thus, 92.21% of readers and 72.00% of reluctant readers had their own room. In terms of sex, 88.14% of boys and 86.05% of girls had their own rooms. It would seem that there was no notable sex difference save for girl reluctant readers, but that those who had their own rooms were more likely to be readers than reluctant readers.

Of all the children tested only 1 of those without their own bedrooms claimed to have no quiet place to read, viz. a boy reader from Classes C and D.

6.15 Reading aloud (Questions 27, 28, 29 and 30)

Parents of 20.00% of all boy readers, 32.43% of all girl readers, 24.00% of all boy reluctant readers and 25.00% of all girl reluctant readers read aloud to their children. Thus, 23.73% of all boys and 32.56% of all girls had parents who read aloud to them. In each case it appears that girls were more prepared to listen to their parents read than boys,

but that this did not appear to affect either reading reluctance or enthusiasm.

81.59% of all boy readers, 80.00% of all girl readers, 61.11% of all boy reluctant readers and 25.00% of all girl reluctant readers had parents (of those who had 2 parents) who read aloud to each other. Therefore it appeared that a great many more readers than reluctant readers had parents who read aloud to each other.

90.00% of all boy readers, 75.68% of all girl readers, 78.95% of all boy reluctant readers and 83.33% of all girl reluctant readers were read to by parents when they were younger. Thus 83.12% of readers and 80.00% of reluctant readers were read to by parents, when they were younger. It seems that although more readers than reluctant readers had parents who read to them, the number of reluctant readers whose parents read to them was only slightly lower than the number of readers whose parents read to them.

74.07% of all boy readers, 50.00% of all girl readers, 30.00% of all boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers read to their younger siblings if they had any. Thus, 62.16% of boys and 54.55% of girls (viz. 61.40% of readers and 46.15% of reluctant readers) read to their younger siblings if they had any. Although there appeared to be no definite sex difference, there were more readers than reluctant readers who read to their siblings if they had any.

For a breakdown according to classes see Table XI.

6.16 Peer influences (Questions 33, 38 and 39)

For the purposes of this analysis it was decided to regard siblings' as a peer influence in terms of their joint enjoyment of books.

81.58% of all boy readers, 80.56% of all girl readers, 77.78% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers, where there were any, had siblings who enjoyed reading. Therefore, 84.51% of readers and 70.83% of reluctant readers, where there were any, had siblings who enjoyed reading. It would appear that more boys than girls in each category and more readers than reluctant readers had siblings who enjoyed reading.

90.00% of all boy readers, 100.00% of all girl readers, 84.21% of all boy reluctant readers and 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers (being 88.14% of all boys and 100.00% of all girls) or 94.81% of readers and 88.00% of reluctant readers had friends who read books. It would seem that all the girls assessed their friends as readers of books and so did nearly all the boys, although more readers than reluctant readers assessed their friends as readers of books. It would therefore seem that the high self-assessment of readers (especially among girls) was valid according to peer assessment.

97.50% of all boy readers, 100.00% of all girl readers, 89.47% of all boy reluctant readers. 100.00% of all girl reluctant readers (i.e. 94.92% of boys and 100.00% of girls) or 98.70% of readers and 92.00% of reluctant readers had

friends who owned books. Here again the girls, who in the main assessed themselves as readers, had friends, the majority of whom were book owners. In the case of boys this was true for nearly all of them. The friends of readers seemed more likely to own books but even the friends of reluctant readers in the main owned books. For individual breakdown see Table XII.

6.17 Book ownership (Questions 34, 35, 36 and 37)

Of those who had fewer than 200 books in their home, there were 17.50% of all boy readers, 10.81% of all girl readers, 15.79% of all boy reluctant readers and 16.67% of all girl reluctant readers, i.e. constituting 14.29% of readers and 16.00% of reluctant readers.

Those who had between 200 and 500 books in their homes comprised 42.50% of all boy readers, 45.95% of all girl readers, 36.84% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers (i.e. 44.16% of readers and 44.00% of reluctant readers).

Those who had more than 500 books in their home comprised 40.00% of all boy readers, 43.24% of all girl readers, 47.37% of all boy reluctant readers and 16.67% of all girl reluctant readers (i.e. 44.16% of readers and 40.00% of reluctant readers).

It therefore appeared that an equal number of readers had homes with collections of 200 to 500 and more books, whereas the largest number of reluctant readers had between 200 and

500 books in their homes.

In a comparison between the number of books in the same home as estimated by siblings - some of whom were readers and some of whom were reluctant readers - it was found that the reluctant reader tended to estimate the number as a lower figure than his reader sibling (cf. 6.27). It could perhaps be concluded that the fact that, by and large, the number of books in the home, according to reluctant readers, was between 200 and 500 volumes (as opposed to over 500) may not necessarily be taken at face value. Unless an exact count of books is made, no positive conclusions can be drawn from either the estimates of readers or reluctant readers, because these estimates may well be coloured by the attitudes of the respondents. Conclusions may however be drawn if they are qualified by the fact that these are perceived estimates. Often perceptions tend to be of more importance to the perceiver than facts.

75.00% of all boy readers, 81.08% of all girl readers, 52.63% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers (or 67.80% of boys and 79.07% of girls) or 77.92% of readers and 56.00% of reluctant readers bought books at bookshops.

Thus it appeared that book-buying featured more frequently among readers than among reluctant readers, but there was no significant sex difference.

90.00% of all boy readers, 86.49% of all girl readers, 89.47% of all boy reluctant readers and 83.33% of all girl

reluctant readers (i.e. 88.31% of readers and 88.00% of reluctant readers) own their own bookcases. It seemed, therefore, that in this respect most of the children, regardless of being readers or reluctant readers, had their own bookcases.

77.50% of all boy readers, 72.97% of all girl readers, 63.16% of all boy reluctant readers and 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers (i.e. 72.88% of boys and 69.77% of girls) or 75.32% of readers and 60.00% of reluctant readers received books as gifts from their parents other than on their birthdays. Therefore, more boys than girls in both categories received books as gifts, while readers received more books than reluctant readers. The reason for the former may be attributed to the fact that the variety of suitable gifts which were available for purchasing was greater than that available for purchasing for boys. The reason for the latter may well not be due to disinterest, but rather to the knowledge or assumption on the part of the donor that, not only would the gift not be appreciated, but that the donation may cause antagonism. For an individual breakdown see Table XIII.

6.18 Extra-mural activities (Question 51)

The number of activities in which boy readers took part constituted (0) 5.00%, (1) 15.00%, (2) 25.00%, (3) 30.00%, (4) 15.00%, (5) 2.50%, (6) 5.00% and (10) 2.50%. The activities

in which girl readers participated were (0) 2.70%, (1) 5.41%, (2) 13.51%, (3) 24.32%, (4) 29.73%, (5) 10.81%, (6) 13.51% and (7) 2.70%. The activities in which boy reluctant readers were active were (0) 10.53%, (1) 21.05%, (2) 36.84%, (3) 26.32% and (4) 10.53%, whereas girl reluctant readers participated in (2) 33.33%, (3) 33.33%, (4) 16.67% and (7) 16.67% activities.

The activities in which boys participated were (0) 6.78%, (1) 16.95%, (2) 27.12%, (3) 28.81%, (4) 13.56%, (5) 1.69%, (6) 3.39% and (10) 1.69%, whereas the number of activities in which girls took part were (0) 2.33%, (1) 4.65%, (2) 16.28%, (3) 25.58%, (4) 27.91%, (5) 19.30%, (6) 19.30% and (7) 4.65%.

Readers participated in the following number of activities, being (0) 3.90%, (1) 10.39%, (2) 19.48%, (3) 27.27%, (4) 22.08%, (5) 6.49%, (6) 9.09%, (7) 1.30% and (10) 1.30%. The number of activities in which reluctant readers participated were (0) 8.00%, (1) 16.00%, (2) 32.00%, (3) 28.00%, (4) 12.00% and (7) 4.00%.

Thus it would seem from the above that the majority of the boys participated in 3 activities whereas the majority of the girls participated in 4. This could be attributed to the fact that compulsory school sports took up more of the boys' time than that of the girls, and that such activities as ballet, music and speech were thought, by many parents, to be necessary for a primary school girl, if an inference could be drawn from the number of girls participating in

these activities. The number of activities favoured by readers was 3, but reluctant readers favour 2 activities. It seemed that half as many readers as reluctant readers did not take part in any activities, and fewer readers than reluctant readers took part in only 1 or 2 activities. Three or more activities were more likely to be found among readers than reluctant readers. For an individual breakdown see Table XIV.

6.19 **Non-book material** (Question 52)

It was found that boy readers read the newspaper regularly (90.00%), sometimes (7.50%) and seldom (2.50%). Girl readers read the newspaper regularly (67.56%), sometimes (18.92%), seldom (5.41%9 and never (2.70%), while 5.41% were unsure. Boy reluctant readers read the newspaper regularly (78.95%), sometimes (15.79%) and seldom (5.26%) and girl reluctant readers read the newspaper regularly (50.00%), sometimes (25.00%), seldom (0.00%) and never (25.00%). Thus, boys jointly read the newspaper regularly (86.44%), sometimes (8.47%) and seldom (6.78%) and girls read the newspaper regularly (67.44%), sometimes (18.60%), seldom (4.65%) and never (4.65%) while (4.65%) were unsure.

Expressed in terms of readers and reluctant readers, readers read the newspaper regularly (79.22%), sometimes (12.99%), seldom (3.90%) and never (1.30%) while (2.59%) were unsure. In terms of reluctant readers they read the newspaper regularly (76.00%), sometimes (16.00%), seldom (4.00%) and

never (4.00%).

It seemed that boys, jointly were greater newspaper readers than girls, jointly, because even boys who were reluctant readers read the newspaper more than girls who were readers. This may well be due to the attraction of the sports page. In fact, because of this, there was actually little difference between readers and reluctant readers when it came to the frequency of newspaper reading. There was no boy who never read newspapers, but a few of the girls (i.e. readers) seemed uncertain.

No one was uncertain and no one claimed that he/she never read comics, although in every case, except in those of the boy reluctant readers in Classes C and D (Table XV) more children read newspapers than comics regularly.

Boy readers read comics regularly (77.50%), sometimes (17.50%) and seldom (5.00%). Girl readers read comics regularly (37.83%), sometimes (56.76%) and seldom (5.41%). Boy reluctant readers read comics regularly (63.16%), sometimes (31.58%) and seldom (5.26%), whereas girl reluctant readers read comics regularly (50.00%), sometimes (16.67%) and seldom (33.33%).

Boys read comics regularly (72.88%), sometimes (22.03%) and seldom (5.08%), whereas girls read comics regularly (39.53%), sometimes (55.81%) and seldom (4.65%). Readers read comics regularly (58.44%), sometimes (36.36%) and seldom (5.19%), whereas reluctant readers read comics regularly (60.00%), sometimes (36.00%) and seldom (4.00%).

Thus it would seem that slightly more reluctant readers than readers read comics regularly and that more boys than girls read comics regularly, irrespective of their category of reading behaviour. Although more boy readers than boy reluctant readers read comics regularly, both groups read more comics regularly than did either girl readers or girl reluctant readers. However, more girl readers read comics regularly than their reluctant reader counterparts.

Magazine reading was the third aspect of non-book material examined. Boy readers read magazines regularly (52.50%), sometimes (30.00%), seldom (12.50%) and never (5.00%). Girl readers read magazines regularly (67.57%), sometimes (24.32%), seldom (2.70%), never (2.70%) and unsure (2.70%). Boy reluctant readers read magazines regularly (47.37%), sometimes (42.11%), seldom (5.26%) and never (5.26%). Girl reluctant readers read magazines regularly (50.00%), sometimes (16.67%) and seldom (33.33%).

Thus readers read magazines regularly (59.74%), sometimes (27.27%), seldom (7.79%), never (3.90%) and uncertain (3.90%). Reluctant readers read magazines regularly (48.00%), sometimes (36.00%), seldom (12.00%) and never (4.00%). Boys read magazines regularly (50.85%), sometimes (33.90%), seldom (10.17%) and never (5.08%). Girls read magazines regularly (65.12%), sometimes (23.26%), seldom (6.98%), never (2.33%) and uncertain (2.33%).

It therefore appeared that readers read magazines regularly slightly more than comics but less than newspapers, whereas

reluctant readers read magazines regularly less than they read comics or newspapers. Girls read magazines more regularly than boys, although many more boy readers read them regularly than girl reluctant readers. Boys read magazines less than either comics or newspapers. Girls, however, read newspaper regularly only slightly more than magazines, with comics being least favoured.

For a breakdown according to classes see Table XV.

6.20 **Attitude towards school** (Question 53)

27.50% of all boy readers reported that they liked school, while 42.50% stated that they only liked it sometimes. According to 29.73% of all girl readers they liked school, but 45.95% of them only liked it sometimes. 31.58% of all boy reluctant readers indicated that they liked school but 21.05% of them felt that they only liked it sometimes. 62.50% of all girl reluctant readers considered that they liked school, but 12.50% of them felt that they only liked it sometimes. 28.57% of readers and 44.00% of reluctant readers stated that they liked school, but 44.16% of readers and 20.00% of reluctant readers reported that they only liked it sometimes. From their own assessment it would seem that 28.81% of boys and 37.20% of the girls liked school, but 35.59% of boys and 41.96% of girls only liked school sometimes.

It therefore appeared that greater liking for school was shown by girls than boys, and by reluctant readers than

readers. However, when the qualification of 'sometimes' was added - although it was still girls who reported that they sometimes liked school more often than boys did - it was the readers rather than the reluctant readers who were in the majority. A possible reason for this may be that, whereas the reluctant reader may have been satisfied by the companionship of school, the reader could have been bored sometimes when the lessons were not always sufficiently stimulating. That girls showed a greater liking for school than the response reported by boys may have been due to the fact that they tended to chafe less under the restrictions of movement which school, of necessity, exercised.
A breakdown according to classes will be found in Table XVI.

6.21 School subjects liked and disliked (Questions 54 and 55)

It was found that the number of subjects liked by all the boy readers was (1) 42.50%, (2) 25.00%, (3) 12.50%, (4) 5.00%, (5) 5.00% and (All, being 10) 10.00% respectively. The number liked by all of the girl readers was (0) 2.70%, (1) 27.03%, (2) 27.03%, (3) 24.32%, (4) 10.81%, (5) 5.41% and (6) 2.70% respectively. The number liked by all the boy reluctant readers was (1)73.68%, (2) 5.26%, (3) 5.26%, (4) 5.26%, (7) 5.26% and (Most) 5.26% respectively. The number liked by all the girl reluctant readers was (1) 33.33% and (2) 66.67% respectively. Thus, the number of subjects which readers liked (0) 1.30% (1) 35.06%, (2) 25.97%, (3) 18.18%,

(4) 7.79%, (5) 5.19%, (6) 1.30% and (All, being 10) 5.19% respectively. The number of subjects which the reluctant readers liked was (1) 64.00%, (2) 20.00%, (39 4.00, (4) 4.00%, (7) 4.00% and (Most) 4.00% respectively. It would seem that the number of subjects liked by boys was (1) 52.54%, (2) 18.64%, (3) 10.17%, (4) 5.08%, (5) 3.39%, (7) 1.69%, (All, being 10) 6.78% and (Most) 1.69% respectively. The number liked by girls was (0) 2.33%, (1) 27.81%, (2) 32.56%, (3) 20.93%, (4) 9.30%, (5) 4.65% and (6) 2.33% respectively.

Thus it would seem that boys favoured 1 subject regardless of whether they were readers or reluctant readers, whereas girls, by and large, favoured 2 subjects. On the other hand readers tended to favour 2 subjects, whereas reluctant readers were inclined to favour 1 only.

The number of subjects disliked by all the boy readers was (0) 25.00%, (1) 60.00%, (2) 5.00%, (3) 2.50%, (4) 2.50%, and (9) 5.00% respectively. The number of subjects disliked by all the girl readers was (0) 21.62%, (1) 48.65%, (2) 21.62%, (3) 5.41% and (7) 2.70% respectively. The number of subjects disliked by all the boy reluctant readers was (0) 10.53%, (1) 78.95%, (2) 5.26% and (4) 5.26% respectively. The number of subjects disliked by all the girl reluctant readers was (0) 33.33%, (1) 50.00% and (2) 16.67% respectively.

The number of subjects disliked by readers was (0) 23.38%, (1) 54.55%, (2) 12.99%, (3) 3.90%, (4) 1.29%, (7) 1.29% and

(9) 1.29% respectively. The number of subjects disliked by reluctant readers was (0) 16.00%, (1) 72.00%, (2) 8.00% and (4) 4.00% respectively.

The number of subjects disliked by boys was (0) 20.34%, (1) 66.10%, (2) 5.08%, (3)1.69%, (4) 1.69% and (9) 3.39% respectively. The number of subjects disliked by girls was (0) 23.26%, (1) 48.84%, (2) 20.93%, (3) 4.65% and (7) 2.33% respectively.

It would therefore seem that 2 subjects was the number of subjects disliked by the majority of both boys and girls, and of readers and reluctant readers alike. For a breakdown according to classes see Table XVII.

The favourite subject for all boy readers was Culture (62.50%). This was followed in order of preference by Physical Training (58.00%), Arithmetic (45.00%), English, Religious Studies and Afrikaans (22.50%), the third language (17.50%), Speech and Art (15.00%) and Library periods (12.50%). Girl readers favoured Culture (59.46%), Physical Training (37.84%), English and Art (32.43%), Arithmetic (29.73%), Speech (21.62%), Religious Studies (13.51%), the third language and Library periods (8.11%) and Afrikaans (5.41%). Boy reluctant readers favoured Physical Training (36.84%), Culture and Arithmetic (26.32%), the third language (15.79%), Religious Studies and Art (10.53%), Afrikaans and Speech (5.26%), with Library periods being favoured by none. Girl reluctant readers favoured Physical Training (50.00%), the third language and Afrikaans (33.33%)

and English, Speech and Art (16.67%). Culture, Arithmetic, Religious Studies and Library periods were favoured by none of the girl reluctant readers.

The most popular subject for readers was Culture (61.04%). This was followed in order of popularity by Physical Training (44.16%), Arithmetic (37.66%), English (27.27%), Art (23.38%), Speech and Religious Studies (18.18%), Afrikaans (14.29%), the third language (12.99%) and Library periods (10.39%). The most popular subjects for reluctant readers were Physical Training (40.00%), the third language, Culture and Arithmetic (20.00%), English, Afrikaans and Art (12.00%) and Speech (8.00%). Library periods was not considered a favourite subject by any of the children.

Boys jointly favoured Culture (50.85%), Physical Training (45.76%), Arithmetic (38.98%), English and Religious Studies (18.64%), the third language and Afrikaans (16.95%), Art (13.56%), Speech (11.86%) and Library periods (8.47%). Girls jointly favoured Culture (51.16%), Physical Training (39.53%) as much as the boys, but these subjects were followed by English (30.23%), Art (27.91), Arithmetic (25.58%), Speech (20.93%), the third language and Religious Studies (11.63%), Afrikaans (9.30%) and Library periods (6.98%).

It would seem that Culture (being history, geography and the sciences combined, which requires a great deal of project work) and Physical Training were the most popular subjects both among boys and girls, and among readers and reluctant

readers alike. English seemed to have been enjoyed far more than the second or third languages.

The subjects least liked by all the boy readers were the third language (40.00%), English and Afrikaans (22.50%), Arithmetic (17.50%), Religious Studies (12.50%), Culture (10.00%), Speech, Library periods and Art (5.00%) and Physical Training (2.50%). The subjects least liked by boy reluctant readers were the third language (47.37%), Culture (15.79%), English and Arithmetic (10.53%), Afrikaans (10.17%) and Religious Studies (10.17%). Girl readers had least preference for the following subjects in descending order, viz. the third language (45.95%), Afrikaans (35.14%), Arithmetic (21.62%), Art (8.11%), Religious Studies (5.41%) and English, Culture, Physical Training, Speech and Library periods (2.70%). Girl reluctant readers only disliked 2 subjects (viz. Arithmetic (66.67%) and Culture (16.67%).)

Comparing the subjects disliked by readers and reluctant readers it was found that the former disliked the third language (42.86%), Afrikaans (28.57%), Arithmetic (19.48%), English (12.99%), Religious Studies (9.09%), Art (7.79%), Speech and Library periods (3.90%) and Culture and Physical Training (2.60%). The latter disliked the third language (36.00%), Arithmetic and Afrikaans (24.00%), Culture (16.00%), English (8.00%) and Religious Studies (4.00%).

Boys disliked the third language (42.37%), Afrikaans (25.42%), English (18.64%), Arithmetic (15.25%), Religious Studies (10.17%), Culture (6.78%), Art (5.08%), Speech and

Library periods (3.39%) and Physical Training (1.69%). Girls disliked the third language (39.53%), Afrikaans (30.23%), Arithmetic (27.91%), Art (6.98%), Religious Studies (4.65%) and English, Physical Training, Speech and Library periods (2.33%).

Thus, it would seem that the third language was the most disliked subject by both boy and girl readers and reluctant readers. It appeared that the subjects which on average were favoured were also those which some of the children most disliked. Those subjects which were liked the most and disliked the most (the extremes of the spectrum) appeared to be those disliked by the smallest number of children.

Library lessons raised little enthusiasm among the pupils, but on the other hand engendered little antagonism. Interestingly enough, however, Culture (the most popular subject and low down in the list of disliked subjects) was the most library-orientated subject of those which the pupils studied. It is, as stated previously in this section, project-based. The children come into the library initially to be introduced to the project by the librarian. Later, they come to the library to do research, both supervised and unsupervised. Thus it seemed that the disinterested attitude of these pupils to the library lesson had nothing to do with their attitude towards the library itself. On the contrary, their attitude would seem to have been a very positive one.

For a breakdown of the likes and dislikes of the pupils according to their classes refer to Table XVII A and B.

6.22 **Soft or hardcover books** (Question 56)

45.00% of all boy readers preferred paperbacks, 25.00% preferred hardcover books and 30.00% had no preference. 43.24% of all girl readers preferred paperbacks, 24.32% preferred hardcover books and 32.43% had no preference. 15.79% of all boy reluctant readers preferred paperbacks, 42.11% preferred hardcovers and 42.11% had no preference. 50.00% of all girl reluctant readers preferred paperbacks, 33.33% preferred hardcovers and 16.67% had no preference. 44.16% of readers preferred paperbacks, 24.68% preferred hardcovers and 31.17% had no preference, whereas 24.00% of the reluctant readers preferred softcovers, 40.00% preferred hardcovers and 36.00% had no preference. 35.59% of boys preferred paperbacks, 30.50% preferred hardcovers and 33.90% had no preference. Whereas 55.84% of girls preferred paperbacks, 25.58% preferred hardcovers and 3.23% had no preference.

Paperbacks were the preferred format of reading material for all groups, except the boy reluctant readers. It also seemed that almost a third of the children had no particular preference.

For a breakdown according to classes see Table XVIII.

6.23 **Languages** (Questions 57, 58 and 59)

Among the boy readers of Classes A and B there was only 1 boy whose home language was the third language studied and only 1 boy whose home languages were both English and French. Among the girl readers in Classes A and B these was

only 1 girl whose home language was the third language studied. All the rest of the children, irrespective of their parents' nationalities, nominated English as their home language.

When it came to languages spoken by the pupils the numbers ranged from 1 to 4. Of all the boy readers the number of languages spoken was (1) 27.50%, (2) 45.00%, (3) 20.00% and (4) 7.50% respectively. Of all the girl readers the number of languages spoken was (1) 64.86%, (2) 29.73% and (3) 5.41% respectively. Of all the boy reluctant readers the number of languages spoken was (1) 36.84%, (2) 52.63% and (3) 10.53% respectively. Of all the girl reluctant readers the number of languages spoken was (1) 50.00%, (2) 16.67% and (3) 33.33% respectively.

The number of languages spoken by readers was (1) 45.45%, (2) 37.66%, (3) 12.99% and (4) 3.89% respectively. The number of languages spoken by reluctant readers was (1) 40.00%, (2) 44.00% and (3) 16.00% respectively. The number of languages spoken by boys was (1) 30.51%, (2) 47.46%, (3) 16.95% and (4) 5.08% respectively. The number of languages spoken by girls was (1) 62.79%, (2) 27.91% and (3) 9.30% respectively.

It would seem that the majority of boys, whether avid or reluctant readers claimed to speak 2 languages, whereas the majority of girls claimed to speak only 1. This would account for the fact that the majority of readers claimed to speak 1 language, whereas the majority of reluctant readers

claimed to speak 2 languages, for there were more girl than boy readers in this population sample.

The number of languages in which the children read also ranged from 1 to 4, but here the only child who claimed to read 4 languages was the boy who had 2 home languages. Among all the boy readers the number of languages which they read was (1) 32.50%, (2) 50.00%, (3) 15.00% and (4) 2.50% respectively. Among all the girl readers the number of languages in which they read was (1) 67.57%, (2) 21.62% and (3) 10.81% respectively. Among all the boy reluctant readers the number of languages which they read was (1) 47.37%, (2) 26.32% and (3) 26.32% respectively. Among all the girl reluctant readers the number of languages which they read was (1) 50.00% and (2) 50.00% respectively.

The number of languages which readers read was (1) 49.35%, (2) 36.36%, (3) 14.29% and (4) 1.30% respectively. The number of languages which reluctant readers read was (1) 48.00%, (2) 32.00% and (3) 20.00% respectively. The number of languages which boys read was (1) 37.29%, (2) 42.37%, (3) 18.64% and (4) 1.69% respectively. The number of languages which girls read was (1) 65.12%, (2) 25.58% and (3) 9.30% respectively.

The majority of children read in only 1 language, with the exception of boy readers and boys generally. More children read in only 1 language than those who spoke only 1 language.

6.24 Reading-record cards (cf. also 5.5.1)

For the purposes of this investigation the books read were divided into 4 categories. All books in Afrikaans, irrespective of subject matter or format, were put into 1 category. The reason for this was that, by and large, books were selected for their ease of reading rather than the subject matter. It was assumed that the librarian and/or the teacher might also influence the choice by selecting books suitable for the individual reader, ensuring that they were not only not too difficult but that they were sufficiently difficult for the child' academic standard in the subject.

English books were divided into 3 categories, viz. fiction, non-fiction and comic. The comic books consisted of Asterix and Tintin books and their number was not included in the fiction category.

A comparison between the reading-record cards of Classes A and B for Standards 4 and 5 revealed that in all except 2 cases (1 remained the same and 1 increased) the number of books read in Standard 4 was greater than the number read in Standard 5. However, despite this, it appeared that the percentage of each type of book read remained almost identical (cf. Tables XX and XXA). It was therefore decided that it was possible to use the Standard 5 reading-record cards of Classes A and B as an additional source of information.

Unfortunately reading-record cards for Classes C and D were available for only 16 of 21 boy readers, 7 out of 11 boy reluctant readers, 9 out of 13 girl readers and 1 out of 4

girl reluctant readers. Therefore, the percentages for Classes C and D in this section were not based on the whole group but only on those whose reading-record cards were available.

In Classes A and B the range in number of books read by boy readers was 13 to 61, English fiction being 6 to 54, English non-fiction 0 to 27, Afrikaans 4 to 11 (1 boy who could not read in Afrikaans read no Afrikaans books) and comic format 0 to 4. The range in number of books read by girl readers was 16 to 65, English fiction being 8 to 52, English non-fiction 0 to 6, Afrikaans 1 to 11 (again there was 1 child who could not read Afrikaans) and only 1 girl read any books in the comic format reporting that she had read 2. The range in number of books read by boy reluctant readers was 23 to 48, English fiction being 5 to 20, English non-fiction 5 to 27, Afrikaans 5 to 9 and comic format 0 to 3. Girl reluctant readers (i.e. 2 pupils) read respectively , 16 and 36 books, 10 and 21 English fiction titles, 1 and 5 English non-fiction titles and 5 and 10 Afrikaans book titles. They read no books in comic format.

In Classes C and D the range in number of books read by boy readers was 32 to 58, English fiction being 6 to 36, English non-fiction 0 to 26, Afrikaans 7 to 14 and comic format 0 to 7. The range in number of books read by girl readers was 38 to 78, English fiction being 26 to 71, English non-fiction 0 to 9, Afrikaans 5 to 14 and comic format 0 to 7. The range in number of books read by boy reluctant readers was 32 to

50, English fiction being 3 to 17, English non-fiction 6 to 22, Afrikaans 8 to 13 and comic format 0 to 9. The only girl reluctant reader's information available was 27 books, being 15 English-fiction and 12 Afrikaans titles.

It will be seen that the minimum number of books was not as greatly affected as the maximum number of books in the case of either readers and non-readers, boys and girls. The reason for the basic minimum was probably due to the fact that this record was based on books taken out of a school library and it was therefore impossible for children not to borrow books. The maximum number was greater for readers and for girls.

Readers read much more fiction than non-fiction - some of them not even having read 1 non-fiction title during the year. The difference between the number of books of fiction and non-fiction read is not so great in the case of reluctant readers. Girls appeared not to be interested in books in comic format, although all read comics (cf. 7.19). Sex differences did not appear to be as pronounced as those between readers and reluctant readers. It should be noted, however, that even reluctant readers read a great deal.

It would appear (Table XXB) that the average number of books read during the year was fewer for Standard 5s than for Standard 4s as was evident from a comparison between the reading of Classes A and B during these 2 years (see Tables XX and XXA). However, it was clear that the readers in each group read a larger average number of books than the reluctant

readers during the year. In the case of readers, girls read more books on average during the year than boys, whereas the reverse was true in the case of reluctant readers.

A joint total of boy readers read 1,270 titles which was an average of 36.29 of books each. The title distribution was as follows: English fiction 50.87%, English non-fiction fiction 22.52%, Afrikaans 22.76% and comic format 3.86%. Girl readers read 1,358 books, which is an average of 39.94 books each. The breakdown of title distribution was: English fiction 74.74%, English non-fiction 5.45%, Afrikaans 18.78% and comic format 1.03%. Boy reluctant readers read 510 books (on an average of 34 books each), comprising 33.53% for English fiction, 34.71% for English non-fiction, 24.71% for Afrikaans and 7.06% for comic format. Girl reluctant readers read 79 books (an average of 26.33 each) comprising 58.23% for English fiction, 7.59% for English non-fiction and 34.18% for Afrikaans and none of comic format.

Readers read a total of 2,628 books (an average of 38.09 each), comprising 63.20% for English fiction, 13.70% for English non-fiction, 20.70% for Afrikaans and 2.40% for comic format. Reluctant readers read a total of 589 books (an average of 39.27 each), comprising 36.84% for English fiction, 31.07% for English non-fiction, 25.98% for Afrikaans and 6.11% for comic format.

Jointly, boys read a total of 1,780 books (an average of 35.60 each). The breakdown of the title distribution was: English fiction 45.90%, English non-fiction 26.01%,

Afrikaans 23.31% and comic format 4.78%. Girls jointly read a total of 1,437 books (an average of 38.84 each), the breakdown of the title distribution being: English fiction 73.83%, English non-fiction 5.57%, Afrikaans 19.62% and comic format 0.97%.

It appeared that girls read slightly more books on average than boys per year, except in the case of reluctant readers. However, the difference between the number of books read by readers and reluctant readers was actually very slight, the reason probably being that these books were borrowed on a highly structured basis. Of more interest was the type of book read. Boys read more fiction than non-fiction, except boys who were reluctant readers in Classes C and D. The difference between the number of fiction and non-fiction titles read by boys was not as great as in the case of girls who read half as many non-fiction books as did the boys, or almost ignored non-fiction completely. The comic format too was hardly read by girls.

For a further breakdown see Table XXB.

6.25 Academic record (cf. also 5.5.2)

In Classes A and B, 1 girl reader and in Classes C and D, 1 boy reluctant reader were excused from the study of Afrikaans. This was taken into account in the calculation of percentages.

The average boy reader received the following ratings: English, Arithmetic, Afrikaans (very good), the third

language, Religious Studies and Culture (good) and Total (good). The average girl reader received the following assessments: for the third language and Religious Studies (very good), English, Afrikaans, Arithmetic (good), Culture (average) and Total (good). The average boy reluctant reader was rated as follows: for Arithmetic (good), English, Afrikaans, Culture (average), the third language and Religious Studies (weak) and Total (average). The average girl reluctant reader received the following ratings: for Afrikaans, the third language and Religious Studies, Culture, Arithmetic (good), English (average) and Total (good).

The average boy received the following assessments: for the third language and Religious Studies, Arithmetic (good), English, Afrikaans, Culture (average) and Total (average). The average girl was rated as follows: for the third language and Religious Studies (very good), English, Afrikaans, Culture, Arithmetic (good) and Total (good).

The average reader received the following assessments: the third language and Religious Studies, Afrikaans, Culture, Arithmetic (good), English (average) and Total (good). The average reluctant reader received the following ratings: Afrikaans, the third language and Religious Studies, Culture, Arithmetic (average), English (weak) and Total (average). For ease of references these ratings have been tabulated in Tables XXIA, XXIB, XXIC and XXID).

It would seem that the academic results do not necessarily reflect the attitude of preference for subjects as reflected

in section 6.21. Although boy readers favoured Culture, with Arithmetic third (Physical Training, a non-academic subject was rated second) it would seem that they were rated 'Very Good' in Arithmetic, and only 'Good' in Culture. Moreover, they indicated that they disliked the third language most, yet achieved a symbol not significantly lower for this than for their other subjects. Here, however, the combination of the language mark with that of Religious Studies (disliked by few) may have had a positive effect on the rating. In respect of girl readers who also favoured Culture, it proved to be the subject in which they achieved their lowest rating. They too disliked most the study of the third language, yet achieved their highest symbol in it. Boy reluctant readers favoured both Culture and Arithmetic, but although they achieved their best rating for Arithmetic, their Culture mark was no better than that achieved for their other subjects. Their most disliked subject, the third language was, however, the subject in which they performed lowest. Girl reluctant readers preferred the third language and Afrikaans and disliked Arithmetic most but actually achieved the same ratings for all 3. It therefore seemed that the children's likes and dislikes might be due to other factors, such as their personal relationship with the teacher or the amount of homework given, rather than whether they achieved or had difficulty with the subject. If this was true, then it could be concluded that their patterns of likes and dislikes would alter over the years.

It appeared that whether the children were readers or not, English was not, on average, their best subject. Boys, irrespective of their being readers or reluctant readers performed best in Arithmetic. Girl readers received their best rating in the third language (and likewise girl reluctant readers), if rated as the best along with other subjects.

It must be emphasized once more that these conclusions are not derived from an empirical investigation, but are derived from assessments based on only 1 term's work and are not necessarily a true reflection of each child's capabilities.

It appeared that although the academic results of the boy reluctant readers were lower than those of any of the other 3 groups, the girl reluctant readers did not appear to have fared significantly worse than the joint group of readers. By and large the difference in scholastic performances between readers and reluctant readers did not appear, for the groups studied, to be more than 1 symbol (e.g. good, very good).Readers tended to be slightly higher achievers, although the extreme ratings of excellent and very weak were to be found in all the groups.

Girls appeared to do better academically than boys in the sample, especially in the field of languages. This result corroborated the finding (cf. 6.1) that fewer girls than boys tended to be reluctant readers, if the assertion of the previous paragraph is accepted, viz. that readers tended to achieve slightly higher academic results than reluctant readers. There did not appear to be any significant diffe-

rence between the academic results of the Classes A and B on the one hand, and C and D on the other. It seemed, therefore, that, although the percentage of readers in C and D was slightly less than that of A and B, the decision taken in section 7.1, which was to treat them as a composite whole, was justified.

6.26 Tendencies or trends among reluctant readers

A list of tendencies or trends among readers vis-à-vis non-readers was collated by Landy (1977: 387), the emphasis being placed on readers. This investigation is, however, more concerned with reluctant readers, and therefore it would seem worthwhile to sum up the analysis undertaken in this chapter with a corresponding list, but with the emphasis placed on the reluctant readers.

Profile of reluctant readers

Reluctant readers, in the main, tend to be boys and to spend less time reading. More specifically, reluctant readers tend to be less likely to:

- choose reading as their favourite leisure activity
- choose reading as a leisure activity
- have been members of a public library before they were 6 years of age
- have parents who are members of a public library
- have siblings who are members of a public library
- visit the public library

- discuss books with their parents
- discuss books with their friends
- consult books other than for school work
- recommend books to their parents
- have parents who will discuss these recommended books with them
- have parents who do not censor the books they read
- have parents who censor the comics they read
- use the school library and bookshops as sources of books
- receive books as gifts
- borrow books from friends
- own their own radio
- go to cinema 4 or more times per month
- read in front of the television
- have hobbies
- have parents who take them on educational excursions
- have their own bedrooms
- have parents who read aloud to each other
- have parents who read aloud to them
- read aloud to their siblings
- have siblings who enjoy reading
- have friends who enjoy reading
- have friends who own books
- live in a household which owns more than 500 books
- buy books at bookshops
- receive books as presents on occasions other than birthdays

- take part in more than 2 extra-mural activities
- read newspapers and magazines regularly

Finally, reluctant readers tend to

- read comics regularly
- be slightly more likely to enjoy school
- prefer hardcover books
- speak 2 languages
- read less fiction
- read more non-fiction

6.27 Siblings (cf. also 6.7)

Among the children examined there were 5 in the first group who had siblings in the second group. Of these, 1 pair were both readers, but in the case of the others the sibling in the first group was a reader unlike his sibling in the second group. Judging from both their answers to the questionnaire and their academic records, it would appear that none of the siblings came from particularly book-orientated homes, and, with 1 exception (a reluctant reader), none of them achieved the academic rating of 'Good', being either 'Average' or 'Fair'. Of the 5 families 1 was the largest in the group and 3 had abnormal home backgrounds.

First, the pair who are readers need to be examined. Unlike the other 4 cases in regard to which the information from the 1 sibling tended to corroborate information given by the other sibling there seemed to be a marked discrepancy between the answers. The 1 sibling maintained that he and the

rest of his family were library members, whereas the other sibling of the pair answered in the negative (Questions 6 to 9). However, in response to the questions related to book discussion and subscriptions (12 to 17) both of this pair were in agreement. There were other differences, such as the number of books in the home, but this position may well fluctuate with the passing of a year. Generally this pair of siblings were (a) readers, (b) not markedly enthusiastic and (c) had parents who read to them, enjoyed reading, who consulted books but did not own dictionaries and did not usually take their children to places of interest.

In the other 4 cases it would seem that there were certain consistent differences between the answers given by readers and reluctant readers. They either visited the cinema at the same frequency per month or the child who claimed to be a reader visited the cinema more frequently than did his sibling (cf. also 6.12).

In only 1 of the 4 cases did the reluctant reader not assess the number of books in the house as being smaller than the number assessed by the reader sibling. Unless the number of books declined during the period of a year, which was possible, it would seem that the reluctant reader, not being much interested in books, tended to minimize their presence in the home (cf. also 6.17).

Only 3 of the 8 children (i.e. from the 4 families referred to in the preceding paragraph) went to bookshops to buy books, 2 being siblings and the third being the reader of

the pair (cf. also 6.11).

Five of the same 8 never received books from their parents other than on their own birthdays. Of the remaining 3, 2 were siblings and the third was the reader of the non-matching pair (cf. also 6.11).

Three of the 4 reluctant readers of these 4 pairs of siblings maintained that neither they nor their parents consulted books for information other than school work, whereas the 4 readers reported that they and/or their parents did consult books for information other than school work (cf. also 6.10). This again illustrated (cf. also 6.17) that perceptions may have influenced the replies to the questionnaire.

Seven out of the 8 of these children did not recommend books to their parents. The only 1 who did so, was a reader, and when he did recommend books to his parents they read them and later discussed the books with him (cf. also 2.8 and 6.10).

Seven of the 8 children which made up the 4 pairs of siblings maintained that their parents did not censor their reading, the eighth child, who was a reader, maintained that his book reading was censored (cf. also 6.10).

One pair of the 4 pairs of siblings and 1 reader of the unmatched pair were taken to places of interest by their parents but none of the other children reported that they were taken to such places (cf. also 6.13).

It would therefore seem that, even within families, the

treatment of children was not identical. Moreover, as all the reluctant readers came from Classes C and D (which had the higher percentage of reluctant readers) the inference might be drawn that peer influences and the rate of teacher turnover contribute towards the manifestation of sibling differences.

CHAPTER 7

CORRELATION BETWEEN THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION AND THE LITERATURE SURVEY

7.1 Age of children: (Question 2) (cf. also 5.1.1 and 5.1.2)
The ages of the children questioned in the empirical survey range from 10 years and 9 months to 13 years and 1 month, which, by general consensus in the literature, is considered to be the pinnacle of reading enthusiasm in a child's lifetime (cf. also 5.1.1).
The reading record cards (cf. also 6.24) of Classes A and B in Standard 5 in 1980 show that, although (with 2 exceptions) the percentage of the types of books read has remained the same as those for the same children when they were in Standard 4 in 1979 the number of books read decreased. Therefore it would seem that the reading peak (i.e. as indicated by this slight decline) of the children corresponds to that suggested in the literature.

7.2 Parental occupation (Question 3) (cf. also 2.2.8, 3.2, 5.1.1 and 6.6)
It is asserted by Landy (1977: 383) that affluent communities do not produce a lower incidence of reluctant reading than non-affluent ones. However, the consensus among authors surveyed in the literature does seem to suggest unequivocally that disadvantaged homes are more likely to yield

reluctant readers than affluent families. In general, the children questioned in this analysis come from a relatively high socio-economic level in a collective sense, the majority of parents having attained a post-matriculation level of education and belonging to the higher income bracket in Cape Town. None the less, the percentage of reluctant readers constitute 32.20% of the children. This is somewhat higher, but not significantly so, than Melcher's estimate, which puts the percentage of reluctant readers in the advantaged school population in the USA at between 20% and 25% (Melcher, 1973: 3110).

7.3 **Size of family** (Questions 4 and 5) (cf. also 2.2.8.3 and 6.7)

No correlation can be drawn between the nature of the responses elicited from the children questioned in this analysis and the reading problems which, according to the literature surveyed, may be associated with large families, because, by and large, these children come from families of 3 or fewer children. Even when they come from larger families, all the siblings do not necessarily share the same home.

7.4 **Public library membership** (Questions 6 and 10) (cf. also 2.2.8.1, 3.3.2.2.8, 3.3.3 and 6.8)

There does not appear to be a statistically significant difference in the results of the empirical investigation between the percentage of readers and reluctant readers who

belong to the public library, being over 80.00% in either case. It would therefore seem that it is the norm for children in this social group to belong to the public library. However, when their user patterns are examined more closely it is found that far fewer reluctant readers than readers visit the public library at least once per month and that many more reluctant readers than readers never patronize the public library, thus indicating that formal membership of the public library does not necessarily imply active use.

This would seem to substantiate the evidence in the literature that public library usage stimulates reading. Landy's (1977: 37) research conducted in Canada also revealed that more readers than reluctant readers use the public library.

The literature (see e.g. Leng (1968: 29-33, 117)) suggests that more girls than boys belong to the public library, although Jessen (1973: 26) notes that in the Bulawayan African townships the pattern changes at the upper-primary level. According to the analysis of the questionnaire there appeared to be no consistent sex difference between boys and girls as to whether or not they were members of the public library. This is 1 of the very few instances where the analysis differs from the consensus of opinion found in the literature. This may also be due to the fact, noted in the previous paragraph, that to conform with the respondents' society children join the library irrespective of sex.

The literature also indicates that public libraries can com-

pensate for the non-availability of reading material, but in such a group as those investigated in the empirical study, books are readily available, even if the public library is not used. In fact, many of the non-users are reported to be among the most affluent and have indicated that they buy books.

Public library visits which stimulate reading according to the literature are not undertaken by the school as part of of its normal schedule. The school librarian does however encourage the children to belong to and make use of it, especially during the school holidays when the school library is closed.

7.5 Pre-school public library membership (Question 7) (cf. also 3.2.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.3.3.2 and 6.8)

The analysis of the empirical study indicates that more readers than reluctant readers recall belonging to the public library before the age of 6. The percentages given cannot, however, be regarded as completely accurate, because they are based on the children's fallible memories rather than on ascertainable facts.

It is unlikely that the child would belong to the public library before the age of 6, without there being some sort of family involvement, and therefore the results of the analysis appear to support the literature, which indicates that family outings, the early experience of choosing books, the early realization of the joy which comes with books and

the importance of stimulating the child at the pre-school level tend to be stepping stones towards the prevention of reluctant reading.

7.6 **Parental membership of the public library** (Question 8) (cf. also 2.2.2, 3.2.8, 3.2.14 and 6.8)

The answers to the questionnaire reveal that the parents of reluctant readers tend to be less likely to be members of the public library than the parents of readers.

The literature indicates that, if the status of reading is high within the homes of the children, the child is more likely to be a reader. Moreover, if the parent of the child is a member of a public library, there tends to be an unstated approval of a child who does likewise. Furthermore, such parents usually ensure that their children join a public library.

The literature suggests that imitation of the parent is an important factor in child development, while the analysis of the empirical study reveals that readers are more likely than reluctant readers to have parents who belong to a public library. As more readers than reluctant readers tend to use a public library (cf. also 7.4), this may be indirectly attributable to parental imitation.

It would seem, however, that this group of parents are not typical of the general population. The literature places the percentage of adults who belong to a public library at a very low level. Dupee (1956: 6-7), writing about the situ-

ation in the USA considers it to be around 13%. Fouche (1977: 3) writes that public library members presently constitute approximately 30.00% of the adult population in South Africa. The questionnaire does not examine the percentage of parents who are in fact library members. The percentage gleaned from the questionnaire is an estimated one, one which is reported by their children. It is therefore not possible to ascertain whether or not the questionnaire and the literature are in general agreement in this matter. Moreover, it has already been observed (cf. 7.4) that membership and use of the public library are not necessarily identical. Even with these reservations it would still seem that the percentage of parents belonging to a public library within the group examined is exceptionally large if compared to the population average.

7.7 **Siblings belonging to the public library** (Question 9) (cf. also 2.2.2, 3.2.14 and 6.8)

It would seem from the analysis of the empirical data that reluctant readers are less likely than readers to have siblings who are members of a public library. This corresponds with reports in the literature which claim that when reading is not honoured in the home or otherwise adopted as the norm, there is a greater likelihood of creating a reluctant reader.

7.8 **Discussion of books** (Questions 11, 12 and 13) (cf. also 2.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.2.14 and 6.9)

There is a general consensus in the literature which concludes that book discussion between parent and child usually stimulates children to read, because it excites their curiosity and gives the act of reading a stamp of approval and normality. The findings of the empirical investigation support this. According to the study, book discussion with parents is more likely to occur if the child is a reader. However, in the case of discussions with siblings there appears to be no set pattern (cf. also 6.9). The reason for the latter may perhaps be that parents who regard reading as important discuss books with their children, thus hoping to establish a book-orientated atmosphere in the home. Discussions with siblings may, however, depend on other factors, such as the type of relationship which exists between them and the question as to whether or not the siblings themselves are readers.

In the empirical study reluctant readers are found to be less likely than readers to discuss books with their friends. Without further research it is not possible, however, to determine whether this is due to the fact that their friends are less interested in books than the friends of readers, or whether this is due to their own lack of interest in book discussion. Peer influences, which are cognate to this question, will be discussed in section 7.24.

7.9 Non-book reading matter in the household (Questions 14, 15, 16 and 17) (cf. also 2.2.2, 2.2.8.1, 2.3.3.1.2, 3.2.9 and 6.10)

The studies in the literature sugggest that in many disadvantaged homes there is no reading material, either book or non-book format. The fact that the answers to the questionnaire reveal that daily newspaper reading is common to almost every household gives wider credence to the findings that the children questioned come from homes which tend to be in the top socio-economic level of the total community. Likewise, the general view emerging from the empirical study viz. that reading (at least in regard to non-book material) as an occupation, is approved by almost all the parents of the group under discussion, corroborates the findings that the respondents do not come from disadvantaged homes.

There appears to be no marked difference between readers and reluctant readers in relation to parental subscriptions to magazines. The same seems to apply to sibling subscriptions to magazines and comics. Such lack of agreement between Landy's (1977: 387) findings and the empirical survey may be attributed to the fact that all the children belong to the same upper socio-economic group, whereas the children examined by Landy come from all strata of society. It is found by Milam (1932: 30) that parents are more likely to spend money on buying books for themselves than on buying books for their children. Although this section does not deal with books, but with non-book material instead, the empirical

study reveals that a greater number of parents subscribe to magazines for themselves than the number who subscribe to magazines for their children.

7.10 Source of books (Question 18) (cf. also 2.2.8.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.13, 3.3.2.1, 3.3.4.4 and 6.11)

The literature emphasizes the importance of both the existence of a school library and book availability. The empirical study shows that the children questioned cite the school library as their most favoured source of book material, be they readers or reluctant readers. The percentage is, however, higher for readers, which seems to indicate that the availability of books is of importance in preventing the emergence of reluctant reading among children. This coincides with the conclusions reached by Landy, who advocates a classroom library as a means of diminishing the incidence of reluctant reading (Landy, 1977: 387).

That the bookshop rates as the second source of books for both readers and reluctant readers in the empirical study tends to support the literature in its plea for the establishment of school bookshops and for a good local bookshop to provide an easily available source of books.

Friends are found to be the third most used source of books for readers and the least used for reluctant readers in the empirical study, indicating concurrence with the literature's contention that peer influences are important in the formation of readership.

The home as a source of book material does not differ, whether the child is a reader or a reluctant reader, according to the empirical study. It does, however, provide book reading material for over two-thirds of the children studied, a finding which can be considered to be confirmation of the fact that, by and large, they come from book-available environments.

7.11 Radio and television (Questions 19 and 20) (cf. also 2.1.2, 2.3.3.2, 3.3.4.1 and 6.12)

All the children who responded to the questionnaire come from homes which have television sets. As a result, no comparable inferences can be drawn from the answers to question 20.

According to the empirical study reluctant readers are less likely than readers to own their own radios. It appears, therefore, that radio ownership may stimulate reading, but does not interfere with it. This is in agreement with findings in the literature that the media constitute a more positive than negative force in combating reader reluctance.

7.12 Cinema attendance (Question 21) (cf. also 2.1.2, 2.3.3.2, 3.3.4.1 and 6.12)

The empirical study reveals that boys tend to go to cinema more often than girls. This is at variance with Stone's (1953: 55) research, which was also conducted in the Cape,

but covered a wider range of children. He found no apparent sex differences.

There are no children in the group surveyed who claim that they never went to cinema. Although Stone (1953: 52-5) found that a small percentage among the children he questioned never went to cinema, he discovered that most children went between 4 and 10 times per month. Hunt and Davitt (1937: 92) in research done in Racine, Wisconsin, USA, also found that high cinema attendance was a common occurrence among all children.

The analysis of the data yielded by the empirical investigation indicates that readers tend to attend cinema more often than reluctant readers. This is in support of views and research findings reported in the literature, which considers cinema to be more of a stimulant than a deterrent for reading. In a research project undertaken in 1948, Lazarsfeld and Kendall, (Asheim, 1949: 427) found that book readers listened, saw and read more than non-readers. Landy (1977: 387) too, in research undertaken in Canada, concluded that readers tend to attend cinema more often than reluctant readers.

7.13 **Parents urging child to read** (Question 22) (cf. also 2.2.4, 3.2.9, 3.2.10 and 6.10)

An examination of the data yielded by the empirical study does not indicate a marked difference between the number of parents of readers and the number of parents of reluctant

readers who urge their children to read. The data indicates, however, that at least three-quarters of the parents do so. Stone (1953: 76-80) found that approximately 50.00% of the parents of the children he examined urged their children to read and concluded that they had a fairly homogeneous background. It would therefore seem that the figure of over 75.00% revealed by the analysis of the replies of the children in the empirical examination serves to reinforce the contention that the children of the group studied by this thesis come from a socio-culturally homogeneous environment and that, although certain reading stimuli are absent, such factors as peer influence, school and community appear also to have played a part in their moulding into either readers or reluctant readers.

7.14 Time spent reading (Question 23) (cf. also 2.1.2 and 6.2)

The analysis of the data yielded by the empirical examination reveals that more than twice as many readers as reluctant readers spend over 30 minutes per day in leisure reading. This supports the opinion of authorities in the literature who contend that most children who have the desire to read will find the time to do so irrespective of their circumstances.

The empirical study reveals that none of the respondents claimed that he/she did not read at all, and more than 66.00% of them assess his/her reading time as being over 60

minutes per day. Testing 16- year olds as a follow-up of the 1958 research (cf. 2.2.8), the National Children's Bureau found that, on self-assessment, 27.00% often read, 46.00% sometimes read and 20.00% never read. Only 3.00% contended that they would like to read, but had no opportunities (Fogelman, 1976: 19). This corroborates the conclusions of the literature survey (cf. 5.1.1) viz. that reading decreases as the child develops into a young adult and that few children will not find time to read if they have the desire to do so.

Another empirical conclusion in accord with the literature is that girls tend to spend more time reading than boys. J.P. Le Roux (1943: 19), Stone (1953: 83-7), Huus (1964: 125) and J. Mulder (1976: 35) all state that their research projects have found proof for the premise that girls are more avid readers than boys.

7.15 Hobbies (Question 24) (cf. also 2.1.2, 3.3.3.4.1 and 6.13)

Empirically it was found that more readers than reluctant readers and more boys than girls are likely to have hobbies. This correlates with the consensus view in the literature, viz. that curiosity stimulates reading and that a child with a hobby has been stimulated with the wish to discover.

7.16 Place to read (Questions 25 and 26) (cf. also 2.2.7, 2.2.8.2, 3.2.14 and 6.14)

The analysis of the data yielded by the empirical study indicates that the reluctant reader is less likely to occupy a bedroom of his own than the reader. In this group of children, all of whom belonged to a high socio-economic level, there was only 1 child who had no quiet place to read. Hence no meaningful comparative inference can be drawn from the replies to question 26. However, these findings support the claim of the authorities that a place to read, especially a bedroom, helps to prevent the emergence of reluctant reading. Even if the respondents of the empirical study have a place to read, the sharing of a bedroom appears to have had a negative effect.

7.17 **Reading aloud** (Questions 27, 28, 29 and 30) (cf. also 2.2.1, 2.2.6, 2.3.3.2.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.6 and 6.15)

Although, on analysis, the data yielded by the empirical investigation reveals that more girls than boys tend to have parents who read aloud to them, there is no difference between readers and reluctant readers. This may be due to the fact that these children belong to an age level that would perhaps prefer to discuss books they have recommended with their parents rather than to listen to their parents reading aloud (cf. also 7.27).

When replies to the question as to whether or not the respondents had been read to at an earlier age are analysed, it is found that more readers than reluctant readers tend to have parents who read aloud to them, although the difference

is not very great.

This is in accord with the literature, which constantly stresses the importance of early storytelling.

However, if replies to the question as to whether or not parents read aloud to each other are examined, it is found that a great many more readers than reluctant readers tend to have parents who read aloud to each other.

In general, the literature considers that imitation and literary experience are milestones on the road towards the fostering of reading readiness and the findings of the empirical investigation are in agreement with this view.

The findings in the empirical study that reluctant readers tend to be less likely to read to their siblings than readers is consistent with the view and research conclusions reported in the literature, to the effect that the child's reading aloud within the home environment is also part of the pattern which helps to foster his reading readiness.

7.18 Attitude towards reading (Question 31) (cf. also 2.2.3 and 6.1)

The percentage of reluctant readers revealed by the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical study, in terms of the given definition (cf. 7.1) is consistent with the percentage Melcher (1973: 3110) has given for children from a commensurate socio-economic level.

The findings of the study that boys tend to manifest a greater reading reluctance is amply supported by the litera-

ture. For example, both Landy (1977: 387), conducting research in Canada, and Hunt and Davitt (1937: 92) in a Racine, Wisconsin, USA, study, came to the same conclusion.

7.19 Parents' attitude towards reading (Question 32) (cf. also 2.2.1, 3.2.8 and 6.10)

It would seem that the parents of the group tested, by and large enjoy reading and therefore imitation of parents is possible for most of the respondents. The literature survey is in agreement that imitation is important in influencing the child's propensity to becoming a reader. The results of the analysis of the empirical data are not at variance with this conclusion. Rather they indicate that there are not 1 but many factors which may influence the child into developing either into a reader or a reluctant reader.

7.20 Sibling enjoyment of reading (Question 33) (cf. also 3.1.2 and 6.16)

Replies to this question in the empirical study reveal that, although there appear to be no differences in parental enjoyment, there is a tendency for reluctant readers to be less likely to have siblings who enjoy reading. This corresponds with the contention of the leading authorities reported in the literature, viz. that peer influence is often as important, if not more so, than home influence - in this case influence exerted by siblings regarded by the children as peers, is greater than that exerted by parents.

7.21 **Books in the home** (Question 34) (cf. also 2.2.8.1, 3.2.14, 6.17 and 6.27)

The empirical study yielded data which on analysis reveals that more reluctant readers than readers are likely to have fewer than 200 books and less likely to have more than 500 books in their homes. As stated earlier, this assessment by the respondents is purely conjectural. It is interesting, therefore, to note that when siblings are compared the reluctant reader tends to estimate that there are fewer books in their home than their own reading sibling. Perhaps this may be attributed to the fact that the reluctant reader, not being particularly interested in books, tends to ignore the ones in the house and therefore has no accurate assessment of their number.

This provisional finding corresponds to that found in the literature which concludes that where books are less likely to be available and the home life lays scant emphasis on books, the child is more likely to be a reluctant reader.

7.22 **Book ownership** (Questions 35 and 36) (cf. also 2.2.8.1, 3.2.11, 4.3.1.6 and 6.17)

Analysis of the data yielded by the empirical study reveals that the buying of books at bookshops tends to be less likely if the child is a reluctant reader. This is consistent with the literature which found that availability of books and the notion of book ownership are important in the development of a reader. Landy (1977: 387), in research

undertaken in Canada, came to the same conclusion.

7.23 Parental book gifts (Question 37) (cf. also 3.2.9 and 6.17)

Reluctant readers, according to the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical investigation, are less likely to receive books as gifts from their parent at times other than birthdays. This seems to be consistent with findings reported in the literature, in terms of which parental approval (which is unstated in the provision of such gifts) contributes towards the creation of a reader.

7.24 Friends reading and ownership of books (Questions 38 and 39) (cf. also 3.1.2 and 6.16)

The empirical study's data reveal on analysis that reluctant readers are less likely than readers to have friends who own books and to have friends who read books. This is in accord with the views of the literature which emphasizes that peer influences are very important in a child's life. It is a very individualistic and courageous child who is prepared to defy the system within which his peers operate.

7.25 Consulting books (Question 40) (cf. also 3.2.5 and 6.10)

Reluctant readers in the study tend to be less likely than readers to consult or to have parent who consult books other than for schoolwork. This is in agreement with the consensus

of opinion in the literature that, ideally, in the development of a reader, everyday life and books should be linked and should act as a mutual stimulant.

7.26 Emotional response to having no reading material (Question 41)

This question was not designed to test the validity of findings and opinions in the literature survey, but was inserted to corroborate the findings of Question 31 (cf. 7.18). If a child considers himself a reluctant reader it is to be expected that the reply to this question will be negative, but if the child assesses himself as a reader it is to be expected that his reply will be in the affirmative.

7.27 Recommending books to parents (Questions 42 and 43) (cf. also 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 3.2.4, 6.10, 7.13 and 7.17)

The analysis of the data yielded by the empirical investigation reveals that the recommending of books to parents is less likely to occur in the cases of both reluctant readers and boys. This is consistent with the findings of the literature, viz. that reluctant readers are less likely than readers and boys less likely girls to discuss books with their parents.

Moreover, according to the empirical study's data it would seem on analysis that parents of reluctant readers having been recommended to read a book are less likely to discuss the book with their children than are the parents of

readers. This corroborates the findings espoused in the literature that book discussion stimulates reading. Moreover, the empirical study indicates that if the parents urge the child to read but do not appear to do so themselves, the child will feel that no more than lip service is being paid to this value and that his/her parents are not giving reading the status which they claim for it. This, too, supports the viewpoint put forward in the literature that, if reading is not respected in the home, the child is more likely to become a reluctant reader.

7.28 Television vs. reading (Question 44) (cf. also 2.2.7, 2.3.3.2 and 6.12)

Reluctant readers tend to be less likely than readers to read in front of the television, according to the analysis of the empirical study's data. However, even in the case of the latter, only 63.64% of readers read while sitting in front of the television set. That the noise of their television sets will tend to distract children from reading is the general view offered in the literature surveyed. This seems to bear out the results of the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical study. It does not, however, prevent a determined majority of the respondents to the empirical study, even among reluctant readers, from reading. This too conforms with the research findings in the literature which suggest that the novelty of television viewing wears off fairly rapidly and children, if they had previously been

readers, will return to reading as a leisure activity.

7.29 Parental censorship (Question 45) (cf. also 2.3.3.1 and 6.10)

Reluctant readers tend to be less likely than readers to have parents who censor their comic reading, but more likely to have parents who censor their book reading. The data yielded by the empirical study is consistent with the findings of research reported in the literature that the application of adult criteria to children's book reading is likely to do more harm than good. In the case of comics it appears from the replies to the questionnaire (cf. 6.19) that, although all children tend to be readers of comics, such censoring does affect the issue to a small degree, because fewer readers than reluctant readers seem to read comics regularly.

7.30 Family outings (Question 46) (cf. also 3.2.3 and 6.13)

According to the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical examination reluctant readers are less likely to be taken on excursions of interest by their parents than are readers. The literature survey indicates that such excursions develop the child's range of interests and are part of the delicate threads which help weave the fabric of the reader's mind.

7.31 **Adult dictionary in the home** (Question 47) (cf. also,3.2, 3.3.2.1.2.3 and 6.10)

It is revealed by an analysis of the empirical study's data that there is no appreciable difference between the number of homes of readers and reluctant readers which have adult dictionaries. This is not in conflict with the consensus of opinion in the literature because the children in the investigation tend to come from homes where the absence of such a book would be an exception to the rule. It does, however, prove that the group tested come from book-orientated homes and are part of a fairly homogeneous background.

7.32 **Present book reading** (Questions 48 and 49) (cf. also 6.4)

A reluctant reader, according to an analysis of the data yielded by the empirical survey, tends to be less likely to be reading a book at any given moment than a reader. There does, however, appear to be no difference in the number who were enjoying the book they were reading at the time when the questionnaire was administered. This question was not inserted to seek a correlation with the literature, but instead to test the value of the findings of Question 31 (cf. 7.18), viz. how the respondent assesses his attitude towards reading.

7.33 Leisure activities (Question 50) (cf. also 2.2.2.3, 2.3.3.1.2 and 6.5)

According to the analysis of the empirical study's data, reluctant readers are less likely than readers and boys are less likely than girls to choose reading as a leisure-time activity. Rating reading on a scale of preferred activities it is found, in the empirical study, that reluctant readers and boys in general are less likely to identify it as their first choice of leisure activity. This seems to support the consensus view of the literature that the lack of prestige attached to reading, compared to sport as a leisure time activity for boys, and the general trend of thought in the modern world which has little regard for reading as an activity, tends to indicate that boys are among those least likely to choose reading as their leisure activity and that the reluctant readers will come from these ranks.

These results support the findings of Stone (1953: 42-9) who found that the majority of children (but fewer boys than girls) chose reading as a leisure activity.

7.34 Extra-mural activities (Question 51) (cf. also 2.1.2, 3.2.3 and 6.18)

The analysis of the data yielded by the empirical examination reveals that reluctant readers are less likely than readers to participate in 3 or more extra-mural activities. It also seems that boys tend to take part in fewer extra-mural activities than girls. It appears from the empirical

evidence that authorities consulted in the literature who maintain, on the whole, that children will read if the desire is there and that lack of time is only a convenient excuse (cf. 2.1.2), may be correct in their assumption. Moreover, extra-mural activities, like hobbies and excursions, seem to have a positive effect on reading, because they apparently excite the child's curiosity and broaden his range of interests (cf. 3.2.3).

Although at first glance these results appear to be at variance with those of Schauffer (1964: 41-6), it must be noted that he included school sport in his range of activities. Such activities were excluded from this study and may well account for the fact that Schauffer maintains (as incidentally does Leng (1968: 117)), that boys on the whole participate in more activities than girls. Furthermore, Schauffer reaches his conclusions based on the hours of outside activity, rather than on the number of activities as was done in this study. If a boy belongs to a sports club it may take up 2 afternoons per week, in contrast to a girl, who may participate in an activity such as speech training which occupies only half an hour per week.

Working in Canada, Landy (1977: 387) also found that readers usually engaged in more sparetime activities than reluctant readers. This finding is in complete agreement with the findings of this study.

7.35 Non-book material (Question 51) (cf. also 4.3.1.2, 4.3.2.1.1 and 6.19)

Reluctant readers tend to be less likely than readers to read newspapers and magazines regularly, but more likely to read comics regularly. Boys tend to be more likely than girls to read newspapers and comics regularly but less likely to read magazines regularly. Therefore, the majority of children, whether readers or reluctant readers, read non-book material regularly with the exception of magazines, which only 48.00% of the reluctant readers report to read regularly.

These results correlate with those reported in the literature, claiming that the reading of non-book material is normally attractive to the reluctant reader. In the school situation such reading is voluntary as opposed to book reading. Therefore it can be inferred from these figures, (which are high) that even the reluctant reader is often only reluctant when it concerns certain types of reading.

Research has come to similar conclusions. J. Mulder (1976: 35), working in a school environment in the Transvaal, South Africa, concluded that girls read more than boys, except in the case of newspapers. The results of the empirical study correlate with those of Schauffer (1964: 56-8) insofar as he found newspaper reading on a regular basis to be more common than the reading of comics, although the figure of 96.00% is far greater than that of the groups questioned in this study. Moreover, in the empirical study, magazine reading on

a regular basis is only more popular than comic reading with readers, but not when reluctant readers are involved, whereas Schauffer found regular magazine reading to be overwhelmingly more prevalent than regular comic reading. In terms of the sex difference there is also some discrepancy. Although Schauffer found that boys read more newspapers and comics than girls, his research, unlike the empirical study, does not reveal that they read fewer magazines than girls. Landy's (1977: 387) conclusions agree with those of the empirical study, in that she found that readers tend to read not only more books but also more newspapers and magazines than do reluctant readers.

7.36 **Attitude to school** (Questions 53, 54 and 55) (cf. also 2.3.1, 3.3.2, 4.3.1, 6.20 and 6.21)

According to the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical study reluctant readers tend to be more likely to enjoy school than readers, but if the qualification 'sometimes' is applied, they are found to be less likely than readers to enjoy school. Boys tend to be less likely than girls to enjoy school. Reluctant readers tend to like fewer subjects than readers, but dislike the same total number of subjects. Boys tend to like fewer subjects than girls, but to dislike the same number of subjects. 30.00% or more of the reluctant readers like Physical Training, whereas 30.00% or more of the readers like Culture, Physical Training and Arithmetic. 30.00% or more of the boys like Culture, Physical Training

and Arithmetic, whereas 30.00% or more of the girls like Culture, Physical Training and English. Taking the same percentage the subject which readers and reluctant readers as well as boys and girls dislike equally intensely is the third language, with the exception of the girls who added Afrikaans to the list of most disliked subjects.

In reply to a similar question Stone (1953: 62-76) also found that fewer boys than girls like school. He found that both boys and girls like History and Arithmetic. If it is borne in mind that Culture is a term used for a subject which incorporates History there seems to be a fair measure of agreement between Stone's results and those of the empirical study. The only exception is Physical Training which does not feature as being as popular with the children tested by Stone as it does with those tested in the empirical study. Stone's pupils do not study a third language and therefore his list of disliked subjects cannot be compared fully to those in the questionnaire. Landy (1977: 387) also concludes from her research, that readers tend to have a more favourable attitude than reluctant readers to school and school subjects.

With reference to the literature survey it seems that the results of the questionnaire correlate with the findings reflected there. Readers in the empirical study tend to like school more than reluctant readers, if the rating of 'sometimes' is added as a positive response. Reluctant readers tend to like Physical Training (i.e. a non-book

orientated subject) most as opposed to readers who prefer Culture, the subject in which the widest range of books is used. In the empirical study the third language, followed by the other languages, are the most disliked subjects for all groups. It seems that the type of book used for English Literature, irrespective of whether or not it is being studied by a reader or a reluctant reader, is off-putting and that the pleas in the literature for new style reading material, viz. books with modern themes or magazines and newspapers (cf. 7.19) (a good deal of which is being read voluntarily by all the children in the empirical study) is valid.

7.37 **Soft and hardcover books** (Question 56) (cf. also 4.3.2.1.2 and 6.22)

According to the analysis of the data yielded by the empirical examination all the boys and girls prefer paperbacks, although reluctant readers are less likely to have such a preference. This result is at variance with the findings in the literature survey. On casually enquiring from 1 reluctant reader as to why she prefers hardcover books, she explained that, although she dislikes reading English books, she enjoys reading Afrikaans ones and these are usually in hardcover. Perhaps the fact that those read at this level consist mainly of illustrations and limited text, offering lesser challenge, many account for her preference.

There is also another possible explanation. By and large, school textbooks and prescribed readers tend at present to

be in softcover. Therefore, although the literature describes an antagonistic association between hardcover books, textbooks and failure, such antagonism through association has little validity today.

7.38 Languages (Questions 57, 58 and 59) (cf. also 2.1.1 and 6.23)

Although the children questioned in the empirical study have parents of many nationalities, the overwhelming majority speak English as their home language. Hence no correlation can be established with the findings of the literature.

Reluctant readers, as opposed to readers, tend to be more likely to speak more than 1 language, but are no more likely to read in more than 1 language. Boys, when compared with girls, are more likely both to speak and read in more than 1 language.

This is in general agreement with the findings reported in the literature that a multi-language situation retards the learning of reading, but conversely, contributes towards the creation of avid readership.

7.39 Reading-record cards (cf. also 5.5.1, 6.13 , 6.24, 7.35 and 7.36)

An examination of these cards reveals that reluctant readers tend to read less fiction than non-fiction if they are boys but not if they are girls. Boys, however, tend to be more likely to read non-fiction than girls. Reluctant readers and

boys tend also to be more likely to read Afrikaans books or books in comic format than readers or girls.

The fact that boys tend to be more likely to have hobbies than girls may be a reason for their more active reading of non-fiction. Moreover, they appear to read more comics and this fact correlates with the information on the reading-record cards, viz. their greater tendency to read books in comic format. Unlike girls they do not express such a dislike for Afrikaans as a subject and this, too, may explain why they read more books than girls in their second language (Afrikaans).

Readers have been defined from the beginning as those who read both factual and imaginative works (cf. Chapter 2 and 6.1). It is found that more girls than boys are readers, and the fact that girls tend to read less non-fiction than boys seems to confirm this finding.

Mulder (1976: 35), researching in the Transvaal, South Africa, also found that girls read more fiction, but less non-fiction than boys.

7.40 **Academic record** (cf. also 5.5.2 and 6.25)

The examination of these results reveal that there are no hard and fast rules for, although boys who are reluctant readers do not fare as well as boys who are readers, the same cannot be said for girls who are reluctant readers. At most, the difference between their overall results is 1 symbol, and within the subject range there are children,

both readers and reluctant readers, who fall within each of the ratings. Girls tend to do better academically than boys, especially in the languages.

In general these findings are not fully in agreement with the conclusion reached by Davis and Taylor (1943: 359) after surveying approximately 150 investigations into children's interests. They report that the consensus of opinion is that brighter pupils tend to read more. However, they do tend to support the hypothesis made right at the beginning of this thesis, viz. that readers are made rather than born, prejudice for or against print being something acquired (cf. Chapter 1).

7.41 Siblings (cf. also 6.26)

At first glance the results of the analysis made of the data yielded by the empirical study in regard to siblings may appear to be at variance with everything which has preceded it. This is not so, however. Firstly, it has been contended throughout this thesis that no single factor causes, prevents or cures reluctant reading. Therefore, for example, even if all the home environmental factors are identical for each pair of siblings, there will still be many other influences in the child's life. It has, however, been commonly accepted that even in the case of twins no 2 children receive an identical upbringing, owing to the varied responses their personalities evoke within their family circle and to the changing circumstances in the family situation.

In the case of the 5 sets of siblings selected for the empirical study, although all come from a relatively highly book-orientated background when compared to the rest of the population in South Africa, this background falls short of the ideal recommended in the literature as reported in sections 3.2 and 4.2. Thus it seems that if the home environment is in any way less than the ideal, even if only in certain respects, the creation of readers at this basic level is very much a hit-or-miss affair, some children being more affected by the home environment than others.

This chapter reflects, with few exceptions, that there is a definite correlation between the findings of the questionnaire analysis and the consensus opinion as reflected in the literature survey. To summarize: both the empirical investigation and the literature survey suggests that reluctant readers are a result of environmental rather than genetic factors; that they are of sufficient number to warrant major concern; that their condition is caused by a variety of factors (e.g. conditions in the home, school and the general community) and that there is no ready-made solution for the prevention or cure of their condition. There is, however, no cause for despair, for much can be and already has been done in order to understand the causes and to obviate the problem.

SECTION E

ANNEXURE A : QUESTIONNAIRE

ANNEXURE B : TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

QUESTIONNAIRE : RESEARCH ON READING

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. The answers will not be marked. By answering as accurately as possible you will be helping in a very worthwhile project. Do not consult with your neighbours as it is your own opinion that is valuable. If you are in doubt about anything, please ask for information. Thank you for your assistance.

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1. Name: .....
2. Date of birth: .....
3. Occupation of parent(s): .....
   Father .....
   Mother .....
   Guardian .....
4. Age of brother(s) .....
5. Age of sister(s) .....

   Underline the answer which is correct in the following questions.

6. Do you belong to the Public Library? Yes No
7. If you do, did you join before you were six? Yes No
8. Do your parents belong to the Public Library? Yes No
9. Do your sisters and brothers (if you have any) belong to the Public Library? Yes No
10. How often do you use the Public Library?

    Regularly (Once per month) Sometimes (Once per 3 months) Seldom Never
11. Do you ever discuss books with your parents? Yes No
12. Do you ever discuss books with your sisters and brothers (if you have any)? Yes No
13. Do you ever discuss books with your friends? Yes No
14. Does your household receive newspapers? Yes No
15. Do your parents subscribe to any magazines? Yes No
16. Do you and your brothers and sisters subscribe to any magazines? Yes No
17. Do you and your brothers and sisters subscribe to any comics? Yes No
18. Where do you obtain books?

    Bookshop Public Library School Library
    Gifts Home Borrowed
19. Have you a radio of your own? Yes No
20. Have you a T.V. in the house? Yes No
21. How often do you go to the cinema?

    Never
    Less than 4 times per month
    4 times per month
    More than 4 times per month
22. Do your parent(s) urge you to read? Yes No

23. How much time do you spend reading?
    Never
    Less than 30 minutes per day
    Between 30 - 60 minutes per day
    More than 60 minutes per day

24. Do you have any hobbies? Yes No
25. Do you have your own bedroom? Yes No
26. If not, do you have a quiet place to read? Yes No
27. Do your parent(s) ever read aloud to you? Yes No
28. Do your parents ever read aloud to each other, things they think will be of interest? Yes No
29. Did they ever read aloud to your when you were younger? Yes No
30. Do you, or did you ever read aloud to your younger brother or sister (if you have any)? Yes No
31. Underline the word (or words) which you feel best describes your attitude towards reading
    Very keen Keen Enjoy reading
    Sometimes Seldom read Detest reading
32. Do your parent(s) enjoy reading? Yes No
33. Do your brothers and sisters (if you have any) enjoy reading? Yes No
34. How many books do you have in your home?
    Less than 200 books
    Between 200 - 500 books
    More than 500 books
35. Do you ever go to the bookshop and buy books? Yes No
36. Do you own your own bookcase? Yes No
37. Do you receive books from your parents, other than on birthdays? Yes No
38. Do most of your friends read books? Yes No
39. Do most of your friends own books? Yes No
40. Do you and/or your parent(s) ever consult books for information not connected with school work? Yes No
41. Does it upset you to be without something to read? Yes No
42. Do you ever recommend books to your parents? Yes No
43. (i) If yes, do they read them? Yes No
    (ii) And do you then discuss them together? Yes No
44. Do you ever read in front of the T.V.? Yes No
45. Do you parent(s) prevent you from reading
    (i) Certain books? Yes No
    (ii) Comics? Yes No
46. Do your parent(s) take you to such places as museums, art galleries, zoos? Yes No
47. Do you have an adult dictionary in your home? Yes No
48. Are you reading a book at the moment? Yes No
49. Are you enjoying it? Yes No
50. When you have an hour or two to spend as you choose what do you do?
    .....
    .....
    .....

51. Many of us take part in organized sport, dancing, clubs etc.. Write down a list of all your activities not directly concerned with the classroom.
.....
.....
.....
.....

52. Fill in next to each item mentioned below whether you read them

	regularly (weekly)	sometimes (once per month)	seldom (once per 6 months)	never
Newspapers	< >	< >	< >	< >
Comics	< >	< >	< >	< >
Magazines	< >	< >	< >	< >

53. Do you like school? .....
.....
54. Name any school subject you like .....
55. Name any school subject you dislike .....
56. Do you prefer soft or hardcover books? .....
57. What is your home language? .....
58. Which languages do you speak? .....
59. In which languages do you read? .....
.....

TABLE I

ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Very keen	Keen	Enjoy reading	Sometimes	Seldom read	Detest reading
Boys A and B	22.22	25.92	22.22	14.81	14.81	0.00
Girls A and B	30.77	3.85	57.69	7.69	0.00	0.00
Boys C and D	25.00	9.37	31.25	31.25	0.00	3.13
Girls C and D	23.53	0.00	52.94	23.53	0.00	0.00

TABLE II

TIME SPENT ON LEISURE READING

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Time spent reading	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Never	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Less than 30 minutes per day	21.05	4.17	19.05	15.38	62.50	100.00	54.55	50.00
Between 30 to 60 minutes per day	42.11	62.50	38.09	46.16	37.50	0.00	45.45	25.00
More than 60 minutes per day	36.84	33.33	42.86	38.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00

TABLE III

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO A LACK OF READING MATERIAL

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Emotional Response	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Concerned	42.11	62.50	38.10	92.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
Unconcerned	57.89	37.50	61.90	7.69	100.00	100.00	0.00	50.00

TABLE -IV

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Activities	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Read	73.68	75.00	66.67	69.23	50.00	100.00	9.09	25.00
Play	68.42	54.17	57.14	30.77	37.50	100.00	36.36	25.00
Sport	36.84	50.00	52.38	23.08	37.50	100.00	72.73	25.00
Hobby	5.26	20.83	4.76	7.69	12.50	0.00	18.18	0.00
Radio	0.00	0.00	9.52	15.38	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
Walk	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cycle	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	9.09	0.00
Musical Instrument	0.00	4.17	9.52	15.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cinema	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	37.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dancing	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Video	0.00	0.00	14.28	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Records and Tapes	5.26	0.00	19.04	7.69	0.00	0.00	9.09	25.00
Television	0.00	4.17	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.18	0.00
Sleep	5.26	0.00	9.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
Write	0.00	8.33	4.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
C.B.	5.26	4.17	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE IVA

CHOICE OF READING AS A LEISURE ACTIVITY

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Choice	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
First	26.32	41.67	28.57	61.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
Second	42.11	37.50	33.33	7.69	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
Third	52.63	4.17	4.76	7.69	12.50	50.00	9.09	0.00
Fourth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Not chosen	26.32	16.67	33.33	23.08	75.00	0.00	90.91	75.00

TABLE V

INFLUENCE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Public Library membership	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Belong	84.21	87.50	90.48	69.23	75.00	100.00	90.90	100.00
Before 6	68.42	54.17	33.33	38.46	50.00	0.00	36.36	50.00
Unsure if belonged before 6	10.52	20.83	9.52	7.69	0.00	50.00	9.09	0.00
Parents belong	94.73	66.67	76.19	69.23	50.00	50.00	54.53	75.00
Unsure if parents belong	0.00	4.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
Siblings belong	100.00	100.00	90.00	46.15	87.50	50.00	90.00	75.00
Unsure if siblings belong	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Use regularly	52.63	58.33	42.86	23.07	12.50	25.00	18.18	25.00
Use sometimes	26.32	29.17	28.57	38.46	50.00	25.00	45.45	25.00
Use seldom	10.53	4.17	28.57	23.07	12.50	0.00	27.27	25.00
Use never	10.53	8.33	0.00	15.38	25.00	0.00	9.09	25.00

TABLE VI

PART PLAYED BY BOOK DISCUSSION IN THE CHILDREN'S LIVES

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Discussions	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Parents	52.63	83.33	85.24	75.92	37.50	100.00	72.93	50.00
Siblings	66.67	86.96	45.00	61.54	75.00	50.00	70.00	25.00
Friends	94.74	95.83	90.48	100.00	100.00	50.00	81.82	100.00

TABLE VII

PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING AS REPORTED BY CHILD

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Attitudes	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Receive newspapers	89.47	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Subscribe to magazines	73.68	100.00	80.95	84.62	100.00	100.00	72.73	75.00
Allow siblings of respondents to subscribe to magazines	44.44	43.47	35.00	30.77	62.50	0.00	30.00	25.00
Allow siblings of respondents to subscribe to comics	50.00	39.13	50.00	46.15	37.50	50.00	50.00	50.00
Urge respondents to read	89.47	83.33	61.90	38.46	87.50	100.00	90.91	50.00
Enjoy reading	94.74	95.63	100.00	100.00	87.50	100.00	100.00	100.00
Consult books	68.42	87.50	76.20	84.62	87.50	50.00	81.82	25.00
Recommend books to parents	52.63	62.50	33.33	46.15	50.00	50.00	36.36	25.00
Do they read them?	60.00	60.00	57.14	33.33	50.00	0.00	75.00	0.00
Do you discuss them together	70.00	66.67	57.14	33.33	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prevent reading of certain books	47.37	41.67	9.52	15.38	37.50	50.00	45.45	0.00
Prevent reading of comics	36.84	33.33	9.52	7.69	0.00	0.00	18.18	0.00
Have adult dictionary	89.47	95.83	95.23	100.00	87.50	100.00	72.73	100.00

TABLE VIII

SOURCES OF BOOKS

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Source	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Bookshop	68.42	95.83	80.95	72.73	75.00	50.00	100.00	100.00
Public Library	68.42	79.17	85.71	63.64	62.50	100.00	69.23	75.00
School Library	84.21	100.00	95.24	72.73	100.00	100.00	92.31	100.00
Gifts	78.95	87.50	71.43	45.45	87.50	100.00	100.00	100.00
Home	68.42	62.50	76.19	63.64	75.00	100.00	84.62	75.00
Borrowed	84.21	100.00	66.67	36.36	50.00	50.00	84.62	75.00

TABLE IX

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Mass Media	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Own a radio of your own	84.21	75.00	62.50	50.00	57.14	76.92	63.64	50.00
Have a television in the house	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Go to cinema -								
i) Never	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ii) Less than 4 times per month	52.63	62.50	25.00	50.00	85.71	30.77	90.91	75.00
iii) 4 times per month	21.05	29.17	62.50	0.00	9.52	46.15	9.09	0.00
iv) More than 4 times per month	26.32	83.33	12.50	50.00	4.76	23.08	0.00	25.00
Read in front of the television	57.89	62.50	12.50	0.00	57.14	84.62	81.82	75.00

TABLE X

INTERESTS

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Interest	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Hobbies	94.74	100.00	90.48	84.62	100.00	100.00	81.82	75.00
Parent outings	89.47	87.50	90.48	84.62	75.00	100.00	54.55	50.00

TABLE XI

READING ALOUD

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Reading aloud	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Parents read aloud to you	5.26	29.17	33.33	38.46	12.50	50.00	45.45	25.10
Parents read aloud to each other	63.16	77.27	90.48	84.62	37.50	100.00	80.00	66.67
Parents read aloud to you when you were younger	84.21	70.83	95.24	84.62	75.00	50.00	81.82	100.00
Do you read aloud to younger brothers and sisters , if you have any	86.67	68.42	58.33	18.18	0.00	100.00	60.00	100.00

TABLE XII

PEER INFLUENCES

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Peers	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Do your siblings, if you have any, enjoy reading?	88.89	86.96	75.00	69.23	75.00	100.00	80.00	25.00
Do most of your friends read books?	84.21	100.00	95.24	100.00	87.50	100.00	81.82	100.00
Do most of your friends own books?	100.00	100.00	95.24	100.00	100.00	100.00	81.82	100.00

TABLE XIII

BOOK OWNERSHIP

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Book ownership	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
How many books in your home?								
Less than 200	10.53	0.00	23.81	30.77	0.00	0.00	27.27	33.33
Between 200 - 500	42.11	54.17	42.86	30.77	62.50	100.00	18.18	50.00
More than 500	47.37	45.83	33.33	38.46	37.50	0.00	54.55	16.67
Do you buy books at the bookshop?	73.68	79.17	76.19	84.62	50.00	50.00	54.55	50.00
Do you own your own bookcase?	94.74	87.50	85.71	84.62	100.00	100.00	81.82	50.00
Do your parents give you books as non-birthday gifts?	78.95	79.17	76.19	42.11	75.00	100.00	54.55	16.67

TABLE XIV

EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Number	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
0	5.26	4.76	4.17	0.00	12.50	0.00	9.09	0.00
1	10.53	4.17	19.05	7.69	25.00	0.00	18.18	0.00
2	10.53	8.33	38.10	23.08	12.50	50.00	45.45	25.00
3	26.32	29.17	33.33	15.38	37.50	50.00	18.18	25.00
4	31.58	25.00	0.00	38.46	12.50	0.00	9.09	25.00
5	5.26	12.50	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	5.26	16.67	4.17	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	0.00	4.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
8	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE XV

READING OF NON-BOOK MATERIAL

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Non-book Material	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Newspapers -								
Regularly	94.74	66.67	85.71	69.23	100.00	50.00	63.64	75.00
Sometimes	0.00	25.00	14.28	7.69	0.00	50.00	27.27	0.00
Seldom	5.26	4.17	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
Never	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
Unsure	0.00	4.17	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Comics -								
Regularly	73.69	33.33	80.95	46.15	50.00	50.00	72.73	50.00
Sometimes	15.79	58.33	19.05	53.85	50.00	50.00	18.18	50.00
Seldom	52.63	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
Never	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Magazines -								
Regularly	57.89	62.50	47.62	15.38	37.50	50.00	54.55	50.00
Sometimes	21.05	29.17	38.10	76.92	62.50	0.00	27.27	25.00
Seldom	15.79	4.17	9.52	0.00	0.00	50.00	9.09	25.00
Never	5.26	4.17	4.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
Unsure	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE XVI

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Attitude	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls A and D
Liked school	21.05	20.83	33.33	46.15	50.00	50.00	18.18	100.00
Sometimes liked school	36.84	41.67	47.62	53.85	12.50	50.00	27.27	0.00
Disliked school	42.11	37.50	19.05	0.00	37.50	0.00	54.55	0.00

TABLE XVII

NUMBER OF SUBJECTS LIKED AND DISLIKED;

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

No.	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	00	X	00	00	0	0	0	0
5	000	X	000	000	0	X	0	0
4	0000	XX	0000	0000	00	X	00	00
3	00000	XXX	00000	00000	00	X	00	00
2	000000	XXX	000000	000000	000	X	000	00
1	000000	XXXX	000000	000000	000	XX	000	00
0	000000	XXXXX	000000	000000	000	XXX	000	00
0	00000	XXXXXX	000000	000000	0000	XXX	000	00

0 Like
X Dislike

TABLE XVIIA

SUBJECTS LIKED

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Subject	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Afrikaans	26.32	8.33	19.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	50.00
Arithmetic	47.37	33.33	42.86	23.08	25.00	0.00	27.27	0.00
Art	21.05	29.17	14.29	38.46	0.00	50.00	18.18	0.00
Culture	63.16	50.00	61.90	76.92	37.50	0.00	18.18	0.00
English	21.05	41.67	23.81	15.38	12.50	0.00	9.09	25.00
Third language	21.05	4.16	14.29	15.38	25.00	50.00	9.09	25.00
Religious Studies	15.79	0.00	28.57	38.46	12.50	0.00	9.09	0.00
Library	21.05	4.16	9.52	15.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Physical Training	52.63	37.50	47.62	38.46	0.00	50.00	63.64	50.00
Speech	21.05	25.00	9.52	15.38	0.00	0.00	9.09	25.00

TABLE XVIIB

SUBJECTS DISLIKED

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Subjects	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Afrikaans	26.32	41.67	19.04	23.08	25.00	0.00	36.36	0.00
Arithmetic	21.05	8.33	14.29	46.15	12.50	0.00	9.09	100.00
Art	10.52	12.50	4.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Culture	0.00	4.17	4.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	27.27	25.00
English	42.11	0.00	4.76	7.69	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Third language	63.16	62.50	19.04	15.38	37.50	0.00	54.55	0.00
Religious Studies	26.32	8.33	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Library	10.52	4.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Physical Training	5.26	4.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Speech	10.52	4.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE XVIII

HARDCOVER OR PAPERBACKS

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Preference	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Hardcover	31.58	25.00	20.83	50.00	19.05	45.45	30.77	25.00
Paperbacks	52.63	37.50	45.83	0.00	38.10	9.09	38.46	75.00
No preference	15.79	37.50	33.33	50.00	42.86	45.45	30.77	0.00

TABLE XIX

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AND READ

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Languages	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
Home language -								
i) English	89.47	95.83	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
ii) The third language	5.26	4.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
iii) English and French	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Languages spoken -								
1	36.84	83.33	19.05	30.77	37.50	100.00	36.36	25.00
2	31.58	12.50	57.14	61.54	50.00	0.00	54.55	25.00
3	15.79	4.17	23.81	7.69	12.50	0.00	9.09	50.00
4	15.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Languages read -								
1	47.37	79.17	28.57	46.15	37.50	100.00	54.55	25.00
2	26.32	8.33	71.43	46.15	12.50	0.00	36.36	75.00
3	21.05	12.50	23.81	7.69	50.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
4	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TABLE XX

COMPARISON BETWEEN STANDARD 4 AND 5 READING-RECORD CARDS FOR READERS IN CLASSES A AND B

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

BOYS

Type of books	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5
English fiction	60.52	69.56	43.59	40.00	70.37	62.50	65.22	65.23	52.17	53.85
English non-fiction	18.42	13.04	38.46	40.00	3.70	12.50	8.70	21.88	13.04	12.82
Afrikaans	21.05	17.39	15.38	20.00	25.93	25.00	23.92	12.50	21.74	25.64
Comic format	0.00	0.00	2.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.17	0.00	13.04	7.69
No:	38	23	39	25	27	16	46	32	46	39

GIRLS

Type of books	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5
English fiction	70.00	72.73	77.55	72.78	68.97	65.38	86.81	87.23	70.00	70.00
English non-fiction	2.50	3.03	6.12	3.70	3.45	7.69	2.20	8.51	3.33	0.00
Afrikaans	27.50	24.24	16.33	18.52	27.59	26.92	10.99	4.26	26.17	30.00
Comic format	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
No:	40	33	49	27	29	26	91	47	30	30

TABLE XXA

COMPARISON BETWEEN STANDARD 4 AND 5 READING-RECORD CARDS FOR RELUCTANT READERS IN CLASSES A AND B

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Boys				Girls			
Type of books	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5	STD. 4	STD. 5
English fiction	19.35	18.52	57.14	52.00	75.00	62.50	56.52	58.33
English non-fiction	51.61	59.26	35.71	20.00	0.00	6.25	8.70	13.89
Afrikaans	25.81	22.22	39.29	32.00	25.00	31.25	30.43	27.78
Comic format	3.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.35	0.00
No	31	27	28	25	20	16	23	36

TABLE XXB

TYPE OF BOOKS READ

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers				Reluctant Readers			
Type of books	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D	Boys A and B	Girls A and B	Boys C and D	Girls C and D
English fiction	58.82	73.96	44.22	75.93	39.15	59.62	28.73	55.56
English non-fiction	18.69	6.84	25.72	3.33	37.02	11.54	32.73	0.00
Afrikaans	20.07	18.94	25.00	18.52	22.13	28.85	26.91	44.44
Comic format	2.42	0.24	5.05	2.22	1.70	0.00	11.64	0.00
No:	578	818	692	340	235	52	275	27
Average No:	30.42	34.08	43.25	54.00	29.38	26.00	39.29	27.00

TABLE XXI

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC RESULTS OF BOYS IN CLASSES A AND B

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers						Reluctant Readers					
Assessment	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T
Excellent	5.26	5.26	31.58	21.05	15.79	5.26	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	25.00	0.00
Very good	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	21.05	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Good	21.05	26.32	26.32	26.32	21.05	26.32	12.50	12.50	25.00	0.00	37.50	37.50
Average	42.11	26.32	21.05	31.58	36.84	36.84	25.00	37.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	37.50
Weak	31.58	42.11	15.79	21.05	5.26	26.32	50.00	37.50	25.00	12.50	0.00	12.50
Very weak	0.00	0.00	5.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	12.50	25.00	12.50	12.50	12.50

E - English
Af - Afrikaans
Tl/Rs - Third language and Religious Studies
C - Culture
Ar - Arithmetic
T - Total

TABLE XXIA

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC RESULTS OF GIRLS IN CLASSES A AND B

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers						Reluctant Readers					
Assessment	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T
Excellent	16.67	26.09	41.67	20.83	41.67	12.50	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
Very good	8.33	4.35	8.33	12.50	4.17	12.50	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
Good	25.00	21.74	16.67	41.67	8.33	29.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average	33.33	17.39	16.67	25.00	41.67	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
Weak	16.67	30.43	16.67	0.00	4.17	12.50	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Very weak	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

E - English
Af - Afrikaans
Tl/Rs - Third language and Religious Studies
C - Culture
Ar - Arithmetic
T - Total

TABLE XXIB

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC RESULTS OF BOYS IN CLASSES C AND D

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers						Reluctant Readers					
Assessment	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T	E	Af	Tl/Rs	C	Ar	T
Excellent	14.29	9.32	19.05	33.33	23.81	23.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Very good	28.57	19.05	28.57	9.52	42.86	23.81	0.00	0.00	18.18	9.09	18.18	0.00
Good	28.57	47.62	19.05	33.33	14.29	23.81	9.09	30.00	18.18	18.18	18.18	27.27
Average	9.52	14.29	9.52	19.05	4.76	14.29	9.09	30.00	0.00	18.18	9.09	9.09
Weak	19.05	9.52	9.52	4.76	9.52	9.52	72.73	20.00	36.36	36.36	45.45	18.18
Very weak	0.00	0.00	14.29	0.00	4.76	4.76	9.09	20.00	27.27	18.18	9.09	45.45

E - English
Af - Afrikaans
Tl/Rs - Third language and Religious Studies
C - Culture
Ar - Arithmetic
T - Total

TABLE XXIC

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC RESULTS OF GIRLS IN CLASSES C AND D

(EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES)

	Readers						Reluctant Readers					
Assessment	E	Af	T1/Rs	C	Ar	T	E	Af	T1/Rs	C	Ar	T
Excellent	7.69	0.00	15.38	30.77	15.38	7.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Very good	23.08	15.38	30.77	15.38	23.08	38.46	0.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Good	15.38	33.85	7.69	7.69	15.38	15.38	25.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	25.00	50.00
Average	30.77	15.38	15.38	7.69	7.69	7.69	75.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	25.00
Weak	23.08	15.38	30.77	38.46	30.77	15.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Very weak	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	15.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

E - English
Af - Afrikaans
T1/Rs - Third language and Religious Studies
C - Culture
Ar - Arithmetic
T - Total

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